

# HISTORICAL SKETCHES

of

## SOUTHWEST VIRGINIA



The Legends of Swift's Silver Mine

Chief Bengel's Last Raid

St. Marie on the Clinch

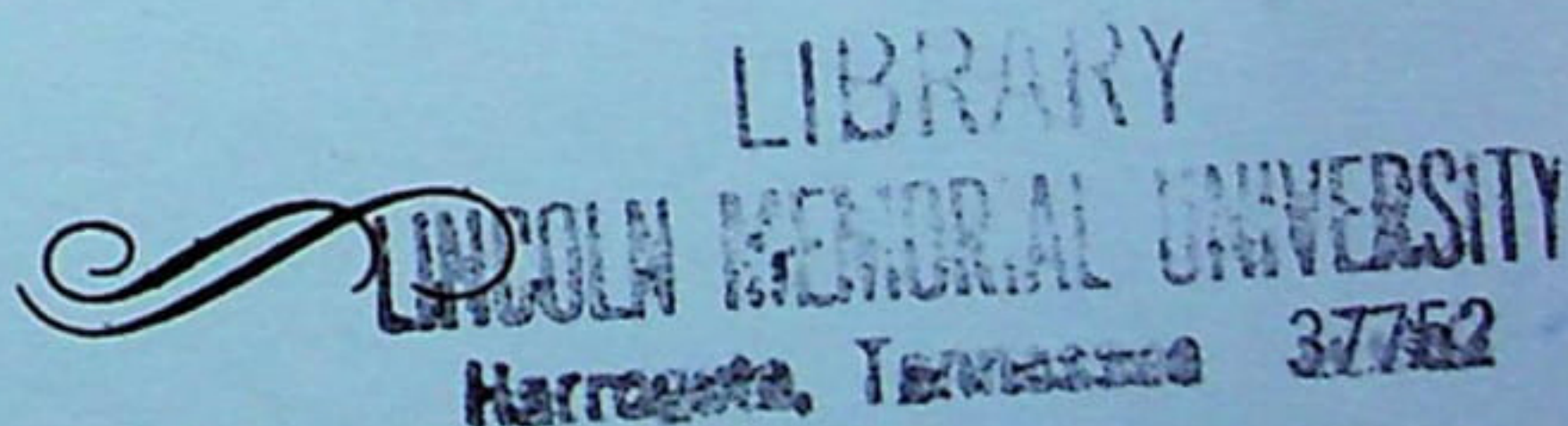
Rufus A. Ayers, Promoter of Southwest Virginia

The Melungeons

LaFayette McMullen, Colorful Southwest Virginian

Colonel Auburn Lorenzo Pridemore, Eminent State Senator,  
Congressman

General Joseph Martin, A Forgotten Pioneer



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# THE LEGEND OF SWIFT'S SILVER MINE

By: James A. Dougherty

## I. A Geographical Approach to the Legends of Silver Mine

Southwestern Virginia, Southern West Virginia, Eastern Kentucky and Upper East Tennessee all claim the mining of silver by one Swift, who is variously called "John", "George", "William", and "Tom". North Carolina and Pennsylvania are claimed by many as Swift's headquarters in his mining operations. Of the many legends concerning the mine (s), all seem to fall generally into two categories: the "Kentucky Legends" and the "Clinch Legends". By word "Kentucky", reference is made to all the legends which place the mine (s) of Swift in the present states of Kentucky or West Virginia, including the headwaters of the Big Sandy, the Kentucky, the Cumberland the Red Rivers. By the "Clinch Legends", reference is made to the area drained by the Clinch River and its tributaries in East Tennessee and Southwest Virginia. For practical purposes, the division of the large area by watersheds is a better way of grouping the stories into categories than to follow state lines. Further investigation also reveals that there are many so-called "fringe areas" that have, by virtue of their own geography, a peculiar version of Swift's mining exploits, although all of the stories basically fall into the Clinch and Kentucky grouping. Among the Kentucky legends one may further derive a different account of the legend for each of the major watersheds in Eastern Kentucky: the Red River, the Cumberland, the Kentucky, and the Big Sandy. These four major rivers may further be divided into tributaries which have a peculiar version of the legend. For example, the Tug Fork Levisa (Louisa) Fords of the Big Sandy have their own separate accounts of Swift's mine, the Levisa Fork claiming Dickenson County, Virginia, and Floyd County, and Pike County, Kentucky, as the location of Swift's Mine, and the Tug Fork being assumed by residents of Buchanan County, Virginia, and northern Pike County, Kentucky, as Swift's seat of operations. Although they have not necessarily been the origin of different accounts of the Mine



Story. John's Creek (Levisa Fork) and Rockhouse Creek (Tug Fork) have seen their share of prospectors roaming the creek banks in search of Swift's smelter.

Similarly, the Kentucky River Basin may be subdivided into isolated regions where much searching for the mine has been conducted. The different small creeks and valleys are almost too numerous to name without compiling an atlas of Kentucky, so only two will be mentioned here. They are the Red Bird River, sometimes called the Red Bird Fork of the Kentucky, and Devils Creek, a branch of the Kentucky in Wolfe County. Also, in Wolfe County is Swift's Camp Creek, a branch of the Red River, so named because Swift supposedly had his silver mining camp located there. A so-called "fringe" area of the Kentucky mine material is Bell County, Kentucky, in the Cumberland watershed. It has been the seat of much searching for the mine, although there is little material to substantiate a claim that the mine is there.

In the Clinch area, conflicting accounts of the legend are not so various, but fairly close to the original source. Tazewell County is the exception to the amazing regularity in the Clinch legends. Tazewell County story is considered a Clinch story, not because of the similarity of the basic story, but simply because it is included in the Clinch Valley watershed. Actually, Tazewell has been the scene of much prospecting for Swift's silver, especially along the ridges north of the Clinch, but the folklore of the County says little or nothing of Swift or his associates. The reason it must be considered a fringe area and contradictory to the Clinch hypothesis is that a very small vein of silver, which some called Swift's Silver Mine, was discovered near Jeffersonville, the present town of Tazewell. (1) The Clinch version is concerned mainly with Scott and Wise Counties, Virginia, although the area of Claiborne and Hancock Counties, Tennessee, has been mentioned by some.

In Kentucky there are at least three creeks named "Rockhouse," presumably for a peculiar rockhouse found on the banks of each. The mention of a peculiar rockhouse in nearly all the legends or the mine may cause one to surmise that these creeks were more likely to be named thus because those who first named them may have been aware of, or looking for, a peculiar rockhouse. (2)



Tug Fork of the Big Sandy River was so named because Swift bored holes in some silver pigs and put a tug through them to tie them together. He is thought to have dropped some of these in a fork of the Sandy while crossing it under the fire of Indians, hence the name "Tug Fork". (3)

At Pound Gap are many caves and Swift is supposed to have stored silver pig in the largest one of them. Past the Gap, on the Virginia side of Pine Mountain, there was a natural corridor formed by the lower ridges which could easily be barricaded to form a natural pound for Swift's horses, hence the name "Pound" and "Pound Gap". This explanation is used in both the Kentucky and Clinch narratives.

The only settlement then existing in the area (Swift mined somewhere between 1750 and 1770) was Castle's Camp (now Castlewood, Virginia). Another famous landmark supposedly used by Swift was the Wilderness Trail of Daniel Boone. Here follows a list of some of the places commonly associated with the mine legends:

#### Rivers:

- Clinch - and Guest
- Powell
- Red
- Red Bird
- Kentucky
- Cumberland
- Big Sandy - Levisa and Tug Forks
- Upper Yadkin

#### Creeks:

- Swift Camp
- Upper and Lower Devil's
- Big Stoney
- Hoot-Owl Branch
- Rockhouse
- Indian
- Bear Pen
- Bull Run



**John's  
Paint**

**Towns:**

**Paintsville  
Campton  
Mount Sterling  
Glen Cairn  
Alexandria  
Fort Pitt  
Castlewood  
Pound  
Fort Blackmore  
Jeffersonville (Tazewell)  
Norton  
Maysville**

**Gaps:**

**Moccasin  
Pound  
Breaks of the Sandy  
Nancy's  
Little and Big Stone**

**Mountains and Ridges:**

**Clinch  
Sandy  
Cumberland  
Pine  
Stone**

**Counties:**

**Wise, Scott, Russell, Dickenson, Tazewell, Buchanan,  
of Virginia; Letcher, Pike, Magoffin, Bell, Wolfe, Clarke,  
Morgan, of Kentucky; Claiborne, Hancock, Hawkins, of  
Tennessee**



Perhaps, with the geography of the area in mind, a look at the legends will be more meaningful.

## II. The Account of Swift's Silver Mine According to the Kentucky Legends

The basic approach to the story of Swift peculiar to the Kentucky versions may be seen best through two good examples of Kentucky narrative. A narrative referring to particular events in more detail than any other is the story of John Swift narrated by Alley's Journal. This story is not necessarily more accurate than the others, nor can Alley's copy of Swift's Journal be ascertained to be the original Swift Journal, but the account is very complete. Here follows a paraphrase of the story in Alley's Journal:

In the spring of 1760 a preliminary journey was made by Swift, Hazlitt, Ireland, Blackburn, McClintock, and Staley to make necessary arrangements for the mining operation. Among the things accomplished was the building of a furnace and the burning of wood to make a pit of charcoal somewhere about the "Breaks" of the Sandy River. From that point in Southeastern Kentucky, they went southwesterly and found more mines. There they made more furnaces and burned more charcoal. They departed from the mines and arrived in Alexandria, Virginia, December 19, 1760. A man by the name of Montgomery and cut the dies for the molds. He was very good at the task, for he had been employed by the Royal Mint in London. It was during this winter that the company was reorganized and fifteen shares were allotted.

The party took many pack horses and left for the mines June 25, 1761. Upon reaching the forks of the Sandy River, they divided into two smaller parties, one of the groups going to work the mines they had discovered the previous year. After a very prosperous year, they returned to Alexandria December 2, 1761. Some of the miners were left behind, but the managers of the mine returned.

In 1762 the party left Alexandria during the last week of March and went west by the way of Fort Pitt. On the way two horses drowned in the waters of the Kanawha River. At the forks of the Sandy, the members of the group cast lots to see which ones would have to mine. Later on, when they reached the mines, they discovered that the men who



had been left behind to work the mines during the winter had become dissatisfied. After a prosperous year of mining, they left the mines on the first day of September, 1762, and returned to Alexandria. They had done well enough to double the number of pace horses for the next year.

In 1763 the pack train left Alexandria on April 21, 1763, for the West. This also was a good season at the mines, and the group left for Alexandria September 16 and arrived October 31.

In 1764 the French and Indian War hindered their going to the mine by way of Fort Pitt, so the party went by way of New River and Cumberland Gap, arriving at the lower mines on July 11, 1764. This year was not a very good one. They left the mines November 8, 1764, and went to the home of Mundy in North Carolina by the way of New River.

In 1765 the miners set out from Munday's house April 14, 1765, went by way of Ingle's Ferry on New River, and reached the lower mines May 2, 1765. 1765 was a good season at the mines. Much of the silver and the ore was placed in a great cave, and the group went through Pound Gap on the return to Munday's house, arriving there November 20, 1765. In the celebration of Christmas holiday of 1765, Fletcher and Flint, two of the company, were drinking and came to blows with their swords. They were wounded and thus delayed the trip back to the mine. The two men made their wills and hid their money in the vicinity of Munday's house. Flint buried 240,000 Crowns and Fletcher hid 460,000. It was on the sixth day of June when the party left for their return trip to the mines, and shortly thereafter, on the second day of July, Fletcher died.

1766 was not a very good year, for many of their miners mutinied and fled. The men tried to conceal the mines and returned to their homes, leaving November 6, 1766, and arriving December 6, 1766.

The next year, with a large train, they left on the first of October and arrived on the fourth of November, 1767. The year was a good one, and the group this time returned to the East by way of Fort Pitt, arriving in Alexandria on the seventh of May, 1768. A great train was made up, and the return to the mine began June 4, 1658, the date of the arrival not known. After a good year, Swift and some left the



mines on the twenty-ninth of October, 1768. At the Big Sandy River, the party was ambushed, Campbell and Hazlitt killed, and Staley wounded. The group arrived at the house of Munday December 14, 1768.

After the arrival in North Carolina, Hazlitt died December 24, 1768. The men got scared of North Carolina, that their money would be cheated out of them, and so they closed the branch of their operations in that State.

On the sixteenth of May, 1769, the group left Munday's house and returned to the mines by way of New River and Cumberland Gap. The pack train was large and unwieldy, and the progress was slow. The date of the arrival at the lower mines was June 24, 1769. All the party were determined to quit the mine, the workmen were paid their wages seven-fold, and much was stored in the "great cavern of the Shawnees." The return by way of the Big Sandy and Fort Pitt began October 9, 1769 and terminated at Alexandria December 11, 1769. All operations were closed out. (4)

The Alley Journal is written more or less as a diary and of course leaves out more background information vital to the Kentucky Legend. A narrative of Swift's biographical travel experiences is enlightening in that it "catches the loose ends" of the Journal.

A condensation of the Kentucky hypothesis is as follows: Swift was an Englishman who first came to Virginia and then to North Carolina. If he had been a sailor, it was earlier, for he spent his latter days in the wilderness of North Carolina and Virginia. He was a trader and an adventurer who had the daring, courage, and contempt for danger characteristic of Englishmen. He was educated and wrote with a good hand. He knew higher mathematics for he used astronomical calculations in his Journal. He was self-reliant and capable of maintaining himself in transactions of magnitude. He was an organizer and leader of men.

In 1753 and probably a few years before, he traded with the Indians and was connected with the English fur traders in what is now Ohio.

As a fur trader, he spent much time with the Shawnees, married the daughter of a chief, and fathered a few children. Other accounts have it, though, that his wife



was half French and either Shawnee or Wyanadot, her father having been the Frenchman.

While trading with the Indians, he was captured by the French, but escaped through the help of two Frenchmen he knew. After his escape, he went to Virginia, and later fought in the Army of Braddock and Washington at Fort Duquesne.

While on Braddock's ill-fated expedition to the French fort, he met and came to know well the following men from North Carolina: James Ireland, Samuel Blackburn, Isaac Campbell, Abram Flint, Harmon Staley, Shadrach Jefferson, and Jonathan Munday. All these men lived about the head of the Yadkin, the South Yadkin, and the Catawba Rivers in North Carolina.

Swift learned about the silver mines from the Indians with whom he traded. The mines had been worked for several years by the French and the Indians. The Indians were Shawnees, although the Cherokee still claimed the area where the mine was.

In the year 1760 a team of Swift, Staley, Blackburn, Ireland, and others visited the mines to make preliminary investigations, but did not work any ore. The next year they returned with the following men on the crew: Swift, Jonathan Munday, Seth Montgomery, James Ireland, Shadrack Jefferson, Joshua McClintock, Samuel Blackburn, Henry Haxlitt, Isaac Campbell, Moses Fletcher, Abram Flint, Harmon Staley, William Wilton, John Motts, Alexander Bartol, and Jeremiah Bates. Some Frenchmen, including Pierre St. Martin and Andrew Renound, and some Shawnees were along also. These latter men met the party at Fort Pitt.

The men procured their tools at Alexandria. Along the way they bought some maize from the Indians in Ohio.

Seth Montgomery and Henry Hazlitt lived in Alexandria, and they were the ones who furnished the money for the group.

Swift followed Braddock's trail to Fort Pitt, then to the present site of Charleston, West Virginia, and then went to the forks of the Great Sandy Creek. The pack horses followed each other single file under the command of the Frenchmen, and often there were as many as 1000 horses in the train. At the forks of the Sandy, some were to go up the West or Louisa (Levisa) Fork and the others on west.

The mines were connected by a short road made by the



miners. Somewhere between the Breaks of the Sandy and Pound Gap in Pine Mountain there was a large cave which went from one side of the mountain to the other. Some of Swift's mines were in this vicinity, and they made the cave a storage place for the silver they obtained. (5) Because the romance of obtaining a hidden lode stirs the imagination of most men, generally the other Kentucky legends are vague and ambiguous about Swift and his associates, but explicit and lucid on where the treasure may be found. As early as 1840 John D. Shane, in the "Draper Papers", said that Swift "had considerable mechanical genius, and possessed a knowledge of the art of refining silver". He further explained that Indians took Swift down a river to Maysville and after landing and going over a rich alluvial tract, went into mountains and found the silver ore in a cave, or rock house. Shane further explains in great detail where Swift had his smelter, coined money, hid treasures, and later searched in vain for the mine. (6)

Thomas D. Clarke relates in his book "The Kentucky", substantially the Kentucky Legend, but at one point disagrees with the other accounts of the legend by saying that Swift was a sea captain, ready to sail for Cuba when he learned about the silver from Munday, with whom he contracted to find the mine. After working the mine once, Swift was kept prisoner in the Tower of London for disputing British Colonial policies, and when he returned he was blind and could find nothing. (7)

Also a part of the Kentucky Legend is a story about money being buried under a large flat rock in a rockhouse. The Draper Papers seem to be the earliest account of the flat rock in rockhouse story (8) (disregarding a similar story in the Clinch Legend). Almost all of the later narratives of the mine and the attempts to find it mention this prize in the rockhouse. At least two of the Kentucky family of legends supplement the basic narrative by specifically pointing out the where-abouts of buried treasure, mentioning caches next to a large creek flowing south, near some marked trees, near a large white oak, and in a rockhouse. (9)

Other sources advance the idea that Christopher Gist discovered silver on his exploration in 1751 and told Swift about it. Furthermore, he and Swift worked together on the subject



founding Gist's Station (Coeburn, Virginia) as an outlet for the silver-trading business. (10)

Another common tradition regarding Swift is that he was a murderer. In 1790 he and the other survivors of the original party (Munday, McClintock, two Frenchmen, and two Shawnees) arrived at the mines and checked their caches. Discovering that nothing had been taken elsewhere, they returned to the great "Shawnee Cave" in Pine Mountain, and while the others lay sleeping, he killed them all with a sword. From that moment an act of God caused him to go blind and made the money inaccessible to any with avarice in his eyes. After crawling back to civilization, Swift, though blinded, directed later searches to find the mine, but all were to no avail. (11) By one source this is the Clarke County story. (12) According to some he only killed Munday (who was the only one with him), but all agree that his soul was damned and he confessed the murders on his death bed. (13)

As a preface to the Kentucky Legend, the following background is quoted from Swift's Journal:

Sir William Berkely, Governor of Virginia, was informed by the Indians in 1784, "that within five days' journey to the Westward and by South there is a great high mountain, and at the foot thereof great Rivers that run into the sea; and that there are men that come hither in ships (but not the same that ours be), they wear apparel and have reed caps on their heads, and ride on Beastes like our horses, but have much longer ears, and other circumstances they declare for the certainty of the Kanawha, Kentucky, Cumberland and Tennessee, whose waters flow from the western slope of the Allegheny Mountains to the Ohio and Mississippi and into the Gulf of Mexico, long before frequented by Spaniards. (14)

Finally, legend tells that Swift was a counterfeiter and buccaneer on the Spanish main, and brought ore to the wilderness to smelt, only using the mine story as a cover. He is also reported to have made bogus money in England and thus was in America as an exile. He was supposed to have made three silver dollars with the ore needed to make one. (15)



### III. The Clinch Legends

The so-called "Clinch" version of the story of Swift's mine is peculiar to Southwest Virginia and the Clinch watershed. The following legend, which purports to have been written by Swift, has inconsistencies and fallacies, but its thoroughness and proximity to the other Clinch narratives is thorough enough to allow it to be the representative for them.

(At this point Mr. Dougherty gave a brief extemporaneous resume' of the Clinch Valley tale. He did not leave a typed copy. One version of the Clinch Valley legend has been appended to the paper by Luther F. Addington.)

An investigation by Mr. Francis L. Berkley; curator of manuscripts for the University of Virginia Library, showed the preceding document bogus. He said that it was "spurious" and pure "tommy rot". His criticism challenged the phraseology, handwriting, and materials in the paper. He said that "smelter", as a place where ore it smelted, was a word not used at that time, that the London Company went out of existence in 1624, and that the way s's and and's were formed is a style of handwriting not known in 1775. Furthermore, the woven paper is too modern for 1775, the variety of paper then in use having been "laid paper". The "soft, furry fell from much crumpling" tends to indicate that the document has been crumpled time and time again in a deliberate attempt to give it an aged look. Finally, the ink itself is not durable enough to have lasted since. (17) It is known that many Swift mine maps were sold to money-hungry residents of the Clinch Valley for considerable sums of money. Is it then conceivable that the mine journals and maps were sold by some patient chiseler as a money-making scheme? If so, the Clinch Legends will rank among hoaxes as first class. Many have been fooled if the tale is false, for the present author has consulted then Swift Journals like the one mentioned above, most of them so similar that phrases, clauses, and sentences are often identical. This is to say nothing of the many legends and searches for the mine, which are voluminous in the Clinch Valley area.

A fanciful notion taken by many of the older folk of the Clinch area (all non-literary information) has it that the



Melungeons, an unknown race in Hancock County, Tennessee, and Scott County, Virginia, were the first miners of Swift's Silver Mines, having been imported to work the mines by Swift and his associates. The odd conglomeration of people still preserves a slight racial unity, and in the Fort Blackmore-Dunganon area, where the mine has long been sought, they are called "Ramps". An article in "The Tennessee Conservationist" reports that they were counterfeiters of gold and silver and their money had more precious metal than did that minted by the United States Mine, and it was circulated without question. The silver the Melungeons used in their counterfeit coins came from Straight Creek, a tributary of the Cumberland River. A family named Mullins were the makers of the silver money in that section. (19)

Common to the Clinch legends and many of the Kentucky ones, too, is that Swift, after being blinded, returned to the home of the Widow Renfro, at Bean Station, Tennessee, and there tried to find the mine, but after failing, drew many maps of how to reach his treasure, hoping someone would help him recover his mine. Most of the Clinch legends claim their origin from Bean Station, Tennessee. This point is disputed, however, for residents of Bell County, Kentucky, claim that Cumberland Ford, a few miles north of Cumberland Gap, was previously and erroneously called "Bean Station." That is the reason, say the Kentuckians that Virginians have been misled into hunting for the mine in the Clinch Valley. J. Emerson Miller, a historical-interest columnist for the "Middlesboro Daily News" told the present writer that James Renfro once owned the site of the town of Pineville, Kentucky. He lived at Cumberland Ford before being killed by a falling tree, and later Swift stayed with his widow and left a map with her. Bell and Harlan Counties have been, incidentally, the location of a considerable amount of searching for the mine. (20)

Despite the close proximity of the phraseology of the Clinch legends, the names employed for the chief actors in that drama are curiously different. Swift's name has been variously reported as "Tom", "John", and "George William", and he is known mainly as an English sailor or a Spanish Buccaneer. Munday has been classified as either an Indian, a Frenchman, and Englishman, or a Spaniard. His



last name has been spelled "Munday", "Monda", and "Mundy". He was a resident of East Tennessee or North Carolina. His Christian name has been reported as "Jonathan", "John Martin", and "George".

Blackburn was said to have returned with Swift, been captured by the Indians, blinded, and later escaped and killed Swift. He was a Yadkin River resident and was a trader with the Overhill Cherokees. (21)

Shadrach Jefferson, or T. S. Jefferson was either a silversmith of Alexandria, Virginia, or a fourteen-year-old boy to care for horses who was finally killed by Swift.

Swift himself, in most of the Clinch Legends, is in one way treated consistently, in that he is rarely called "John". He is usually called an English mariner or smith. According to a fringe source, there were two Swifts--John and William. They were brothers and both silversmiths. (22) Swift was a merchant from Alexandria, a trader with the Indians, or a resident of the Upper Yadkin area.

Of all the above information given in this paper, there is no proof of any fact given which the present author would deem as worthy to stand before any strict Court of Inquiry. About one Jonathan W. Swift, however, the following statement may be safely and accurately be made: a man by the name of Jonathan Swift, J. W. Swift, Jonathan W. Swift, or J. Swift did live in Alexandria, Virginia in the latter half of the Eighteenth Century and has often been considered a prominent citizen. In 1786, he signed a petition to the Virginia General Assembly regarding aid for Alexandria Academy, established by George Washington. (23) In 1787, he signed a petition to the Assembly regarding wheat inspection. (24) In 1790, he was mentioned in the Assembly regarding the sale of lots in Portsmouth. (25) In 1792, he signed a petition to the Assembly along with other Alexandria merchants requesting the establishment of a state bank in Alexandria. (26) Soon after the death of President Washington, he became a charter member of the Washington Society and was their first treasurer. (Later members of the club, incidentally, were to include Francis Scott Key and John Marshall.) (27) Is this the same Swift?--it is extremely doubtful.

There remains yet but one area of the Clinch Legend not yet covered--Dickenson County, Virginia. Dickenson



County is, for purposes of this paper, a fringe area and really does not fit into either of the two major classifications. Geographically, the County is drained by the Levisa Fork of the Sandy River and thus should be included in the Kentucky Legends. However, the approach to the story of the mine is a little unique, but it more closely resembles the Clinch Legend Family in form.

The Dickenson County version of the mine story has the same method of approach that is similar to the Clinch tales--i. e. counting the fourth ridge from the Blue Ridge. (28) Some of the material mentioned, though, is referring to the Big Sandy and its tributaries. According to the tale, Swift, Jefferson, and Munday discovered the mine, but could not work it and covered the entrance. From there they journeyed to Castle's Woods, but Munday was killed in a quarrel over the division of spoils and the Indians stole the rest. Swift returned to the fort, but soon lost his sight. He got the assistance of the grandfathers of Morgan Lipps, Covey Holebrook, and Eli Hill and an Old Man Castle. He took them to Nancy Gap on Sandy Ridge and told them to look for a forked Dogwood tree. They could not find anything, so Swift broke down and cried like a baby. (29)

#### A Version of the Clinch Valley Legend

This account was published in Charles A. Johnson's History of Wise County. Mr. Johnson said, "The date from which this sketch is prepared is taken from a copy of what is said to be one of Swift's original 'Mine Maps and Mine History'. The copy is thought to be a century and a half old. It was so old and so delicate it had to be handled with utmost care, and looked to be in powdered condition ready to fall apart."

Quoting from the journal: "In the year 1738-39 a Frenchman was captured by the Cherokees and taken from the territory now known as North Carolina into the Mountains to the westward. They led him to an ancient silver mine, known only to the Indians.

"The Frenchman remained with the Indians three years, then, making his escape, returned to his home in North Carolina. While he was with the Indians they took him to a silver mine. He marked the place with the intention of returning to the mine at some future time. He had not



remained at home very long until he decided to return to the mine and work up some rich ore.

"He employed a silversmith named Swift to accompany him. They returned to the silver mine by the route that had been mapped out by the Frenchman, and on reaching the mine it was examined by Swift, the silversmith, and pronounced to be the richest known. They succeeded in coining up lots of the rich metal into French crowns--enough for two horse loads.

"Then they decided to return home. After remaining at their homes in North Carolina three months, they decided to return again to the mine, which they attempted to do, but reaching the section where the mine was supposed to be located, and failing to find it after diligent search for several days, they gave up all hope of ever finding it. After such hope was abandoned, Swift gave out maps and charts describing the mine, also a waybill to its location which reads as follows:

#### SWIFT'S DIRECTIONS

"Me and my guide coming to the mine, marked our path by rocks, creeks, gaps, and maps on trees. Traveling 35 to 40 miles, crossing a mountain and rocky region, we came through large gaps filled with Indians, called Mecca. From there through a bluffy region; thence from there to a cliff on the right, thence up a creek, crossing in the opposite direction to the cliff, thence through a bottom by an old Indian grave yard; thence by said branch to a buffalo or deer lick gap, thence through the gap to a valley running east and west, thence four or five miles to a half moon shaped rock house in the mountain on a little creek full of cedars and spruce pines where we smelted our silver ore; thence back eastward to a ridge that runneth eastward to a saddle gap in the ridge where the mine is. At the mouth of the mine stands a tree to which is tacked a card bearing the words, "Swift and Munday's Mine Map. Take Notice."

"In the mine is pick and canteen we left and also money moulds. Our sheep skin aprons was also left in the rockhouse and loads of coined French crowns buried on the right side as you go in the rockhouse. The ore was in a gray rock with a sandstone ridge running nearby.



"The mouth of the mine was about as large as a hogs-head or barrel and dropped straight down in the ground for about ten foot, then made off level."

#### IV. A Historico-Critical Comment

The author would like very much to answer the following questions:

Who was John Swift?

Did he really live, mine silver, and coin money?

Did he have a mine? If so, where?

What is the origin of the different and conflicting accounts of the mine?

Is there still buried in the Southern Appalachians a vast lode of treasure?

Were the many people "taken in" by swindlers selling treasure maps completely fooled, or is there some truth to the story?

What part did the Shawnee Indians play in the mine story? the Spaniards? the French?

Diligent research and more careful historical criticism not in the scope of this paper might perhaps yield the answers, or at least partial answers, to these questions. Some of them will perhaps never be answered. Either way, they have not been answered in this paper. Was the man who said the story Swift's Silver Mine'' . . . is based apparently on old tales told by the Cherokee Indians . . ." correct? (30) Or are several generations of mountain people correct in saying that there was and is a Swift Silver Mine that cannot be discovered because of the intervention of the wrath of a God who says, "the love of money is the root of all evil"?

The following poem, taken from Southeastern Kentucky folklore suggests the evasiveness of the mine:

The Silver Mine of Swift,  
A fine will-o-the-wisp  
Left in a heroic age  
For a vision of the sage  
With reason bereft. (31)



## FOOTNOTE PAGE

1 John Newton Harman, Sr., Annals of Tazewell County, Virginia, 2 vols. (Richmond, 1922), I: 385.

2 A rockhouse is a large overhanging rock, usually over a stream, so named because early woodsmen could obtain shelter from the weather in the area underneath its protruding upper ledge or in the cave which could often be found at the base of the rockhouse.

3 John D. Shane in The Draper Collection of Manuscripts, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 12CC211.

4 William Connelley and E. M. Coulter, History of Kentucky, 5 vols. (Chicago, 1922), I:131.

5 Ibid., I:123,4. The above eleven paragraphs are based upon the account given in this reference.

6 Shane, Draper Collection, 12CC11-41.

7 Thomas D. Clark, The Kentucky (New York, 1942), p. 23.

8 Shane, Draper Collection, 16CC314-17, 322-25.

9 See James Lane Allen, Louisville Courier-Journal, December 12, 1959, or John M. Ross, "Kentucky's Annual Hunt for John Swift's Treasure", \_\_\_\_\_, 1930.

10 James Taylor Adams, "John Swift's Silver", The Knoxville Journal, August 1, 1937.

11 Connelley and Coulter, History of Kentucky, I:122.

12 Clark, The Kentucky, p. 28.

13 Ibid.; see also Adams, Knoxville Journal, August 1, 1937; and Draper Papers 12CC211.

14 Connelley and Coulter, History of Kentucky. p. 111.

15 Ibid., 123. See also Ross, "Hunt for Swift's Treasure".



16 This affidavit supposedly of Swift is from the private papers of the late A. Hardee Dougherty of Russellville, Tennessee, and is now in the possession of the present author.

17 This information was rendered to the present author orally at the University of Virginia Library April 21, 1961, by Mr. Francis L. Berkely, Jr., associate librarian, and two of his staff--Miss Ann Freudenberg and Mr. Robert E. Stocking.

19 "Melungeons: The Mystery People of Tennessee," The Tennessee Conservationist, August, 1959. p. 18. In checking the Court Records at Abingdon, Virginia, it was discovered that one Jackson Mullins was sentenced to the Federal Penitentiary in Albany, New York, for coining counterfeit money. (Court Order Book, U. S. District Court, Western District of Virginia, Abingdon, March 20, 1871-1877. pp. 204, 237, 242-3.)

20 Oral material from J. Emerson Miller, 414 Lynwood Avenue, Middlesboro, Kentucky.

21 Adams, Middlesboro Daily News, July 2, 1959.

22 Adams, Knoxville Journal, August 1, 1937. The idea that there were two Swifts is a unique one. In no other account is that fact revealed; thus, it is here considered a "fringe" story - historically, not geographically.

23 J. A. C. Chandler and E. G. Swem, eds., William and Mary College Historical Quarterly, Volume I, Series 2, January, 1921, Number 1.

24 Ibid., Volume II, Series 2, October, 1922, Number 4. p. 291.

25 William Waller Hening, The Statutes at Large, 12 vols. (Philadelphia, 1823), XIII:175.

26 William and Mary Quarterly, Volume III, Series 2, July, 1923, Number 3. p. 207.

27 Lyon G. Tyler, ed., Tyler's Quarterly Historical and



Genealogical Magazine, Volume IX, Number 3, Janaury, 1928, p. 150.

28 Mrs. Palmer P. Ball, "Dickenson County Silver Mine Still Causes Big Talk", Bristol Herald Courier, March 26, 1961. p. 5-B.

29 Elihu Jasper Sutherland, Meet Virginia's Baby (Clintwood, 1955), p. 265.

30 Ibid., 264.

31 Harvey Fuson, History of Bell County, 2 vols. (New York, 1947, 1947), I: \_\_.

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## CHIEF BENGE'S LAST RAID

By: Luthur F. Addington

April 6, 1794 the half-breed Cherokee, Chief Bengé, and his band of frontier marauders entered the quiet little settlement fifteen miles west of the present town of Abingdon and attacked the home of Peter Livingston. At the time Peter and his brother Henry were out on the farm and the women folk, children and a few slaves were in or near the house.

Peter Livingston and Henry were the sons of William Todd and Sarah Livingston who had come to Botetourt County, Virginia, around 1765 and had settled on the North Holston near the present town of Mendota. This area in 1772 lay in Fincastle County, 1776 in Washington County.

October 4, 1776 the will of William Todd Livingston was probated in the court at Abingdon, county seat of Washington County. This will stated that his estate was to go to his wife Sarah, and his eight children. (1)

Over the ensuing years Peter became the owner of the entire estate; furthermore, he accumulated nearly 2,000 acres additional. (2)



Because of his vast land holdings he needed many farm workers. This was done by relatives, neighbors and slaves. At the time of the Indian attack his brother Henry and Henry's second wife, Susanna, were living with him and his wife Elizabeth. Also in the home was Peter's mother who at the time of the attack was tomahawked, resulting in death four days later. (3)

Chief Bengé was particularly interested in capturing and taking North Negroes whom he could sell for a price; and the presence of slaves on the Livingston plantation had interested him in risking the attack.

Now let's have the story as told by Elizabeth Livingston, wife of Peter Livingston, to Arthur Campbell, military officer of the area, and certified by him to the Governor of Virginia, April 15, 1794.

It ran as follows:

"April 6, 1794, about 10 o'clock in the morning, I was sitting in my house when the fierceness of the dog's barking alarmed me. I looked out and saw seven Indians approaching the house, armed and painted in a frightful manner. No person was within but a child ten years old, another of two, and my sucking infant.

"My husband and his brother Henry had just walked out to a barn at some distance in the field. My sister-in-law, Susanna (Henry's second wife) was with the remaining children in an out-house.

"Old Mrs. Livingston (Sarah, Peter's mother) was in the garden.

"I immediately shut and fastened the door; they (Indians) came furiously up and tried to burst it open, demanding several times of me to open the door, which I refused.

"Then they fired two guns; one ball pierced through the door but did no harm. I then thought of my husband's rifle, took it down, but it being double triggered, I was at a loss; at length I fired through the door, but it not being well aimed I did no execution.

"However, the Indians retired from that place, and soon after I found an adjoining house was on fire, and I and my children were suffering much from smoke. I opened the door and an Indian immediately advanced and took me prisoner, together with the two children. (There were three children in the house, one an infant; this one she carried herself.)



"I then discovered that they had my remaining children in their possession, my sister-in-law Susanna, a Negro wench and her young child, a Negro man of Edward Callahan's, and a Negro boy of our own about eight years old.

"They (Indians) were fearful of going into the house to plunder, supposing that it had been a man that had shot at them and he was yet within.

"So our whole clothing and household furniture were consumed in the flames, which I was then pleased to see, rather than it should be of use to the savages.

"We were all hurried a short distance, where the Indians were busy dividing and putting in packs for each to carry his part of the booty taken.

"I observed them careless about the children, and most of the Indians being some distance off in front, I called with a low voice to my eldest daughter (Susanna), gave her my youngest child (Henrietta), and told them to run toward neighbor John Russell's. They with reluctance left me, sometimes halting, sometimes looking back. I beckoned them to go on, although I inwardly felt pangs not to be expressed on account of our doleful separation. The two Indians in the rear either did not notice this scene, or they were willing the children might run back.

"That evening the Indians crossed Clinch Mountain and went as far as Copper Creek, distance about 8 miles.

"April 7. Set out early in the morning, crossed Clinch River at McClain's fishdam (just below the present town of Dungannon) about 12 o'clock, then steered northwardly towards the head of Stony Creek. Then the Indians camped carelessly--had no back spy nor kept sentries out. This day's journey was about twenty miles.

"April 8. Continued in camp until the sun was more than an hour high; then set out and slowly traveled five or six miles and camped near the foot of Powell Mountain.

"This day Benge, the Indian chief, became more pleasant and spoke freely to the prisoners. He told them that he was about to carry them to the Cherokee and Shawnee towns; that in his route in the wilderness was his brother with two other Indians hunting, so that he might have provisions when he returned; that at his camp were several white prisoners taken from Kentucky, with horses and saddles to carry them to the towns.



“He made inquiry of several persons on Holston, particularly Old General Shelby, and said he would pay him a visit during the ensuing summer and take away all his Negroes. He frequently inquired who had Negroes and threatened he would have them all off North Holston. He said all the Chickamooga towns were for war and would soon be very troublesome for the white folks.

“This day, April 8, Bengé sent two of the Indians ahead to hunt.

“April 9. After traveling about five miles, which was over Powell’s Mountain and near the foot of Stone Mountain, a party of 13 men, under command of Lieutenant Vincent Hobbs, of the militia of Lee County, met the enemy in front, attacked and killed Bengé the first fire. I was at that time some distance off in the rear. The Indian who was my guard at first halted on hearing the firing. He then ordered me to run which I performed slowly. He then attempted to strike me in the head with the tomahawk, which I defended as well as I could with my arm. By this time two of our people came in view, which encouraged me to struggle all I could. The Indian at this instant pushed me backward, and I fell over a log, at the same time aiming a violent blow at my head, which in part spent its force on me and laid me out for dead. The first thing I afterward remembered, was my good friends around me giving me all the assistance in their power for my relief. They told me I was senseless for about an hour.”

“Certified this 15 th day of April, 1794.

“A. Campbell (4)”

Eventually Peter and Henry Livingston saw smoke boiling above the low rolling hills between their barn and their home; they ran homeward but when they arrived, the houses were nearly burned down. Lying on the ground were the bodies of Sarah Livingston and one Negro child, each having been tomahawked.

The Livingston men knew there were about three trails the Indians could take across Clinch Mountain, or they could go by way of Moccasin Gap and there take the Wilderness Road. Trail signs showed they had likely gone toward Hamilton Gap in Clinch Mountain.



The little settlement did not have enough men to pursue and hope to get in sight of the party. But they could hurry to other settlements and get enough help to overpower the Indians if they cut them off somewhere to the north.

So, one man, John Henderson, was sent on horseback to alert the settlers in Powell Valley, about seventy miles to the northwest on the Wilderness Road. The two Livingston men, Peter and Henry, set off in the direction of Castle's Wood to the northeast. It was their plan to get help at this settlement and to block all trails in the Cumberland Mountains.

The Livingston men, knowing that the Indians had taken white women, and Negroes whom they could sell, would not likely kill any of them on the march. Believing this, the men decided to risk going long distances for help rather than to try to pursue directly. If just a few men should have overtaken the savages, the women would have been killed, they knew.

Now let's examine the records and try to straighten out a few points of contention existing even today in the area where Chief Benge was killed.

To begin with, several years ago a marker was put up just south of Norton, Virginia, saying that a little way above it, at the base of High Knob, the highest peak of Powell Mountain, Benge was slain by Vincent Hobbs of the Lee County militia. The little stream which flows out of the mountain at this point bears the name Benge's Branch.

The facts do not bear out the correctness of this marker. We can see by Mrs. Livingston's account of the 9th day's traveling that, after camping the night before at the base of Powell Mountain, they went about five miles, which was over Powell Mountain and to the foot of Stone Mountain, where Hobbs and his men met them. Stone Mountain has its beginning west of Norton and continues until it is broken by the well-known Big Stone Gap, situated just north of the town of Big Stone Gap. The mountain here has been worn into a great, rugged, stone gap by the northern tributary of Powell River.

Now it was at this great Stone Gap that Chief Benge was most likely slain by Hobbs. Charles B. Cole in his account of Mrs. Scott's capture by Chief Benge in Lee County in 1785, said, "Benge was killed nine years later (after the



Mrs. Scott captivity) as he was making his way to Big Stone Gap with the Livingston captives." (5)

Summers, quoting a manuscript letter of Benjamin Sharp, further states, "Vincent Hobbs was a lieutenant in the militia of Lee County, Virginia, and, at the time in question, he was attending court of that county which was in session. Upon the arrival of the express with the news of the Indian invasion, the court immediately adjourned and a party was organized upon the spot, under the command of Hobbs, to waylay a gap in the Cumberlands called Stone Gap, through which the Indians were supposed to pass."

"In this party, besides Vincent Hobbs, were: John Van Bever, Job Hobbs, Stephen Jones, James Huff, James Van Bever, Peter Van Bever, Abraham Hobbs, Adam Ely, Samuel Livingston, George Yokum and \_\_\_\_\_ Dotson." (6)

Although Elizabeth Livingston in her account said there were thirteen men in Hobbs party, only twelve are named by Sharp. One of these had a blank instead of the first name. This was probably Capt. William Dorton, a scout for Andrew Lewis, who was in the party.

Under date of April 19, 1795 Andrew Lewis wrote the governor of Virginia as follows: "The inhabitants in pursuit of the Indians retook the prisoners and killed two of them. The rest ran off. Capt. William Dorton, one of my scouts, who was with the party, endeavoring to head them off, fell in with them that ran off, being three in number, two of which he killed on the ground; the other ran off mortally wounded. Only one escaped without a wound. (7)

"Prior to this battle, Lieutenant Hobbs on reaching Stone Gap, discovered that Indians had just passed through before him; he therefore pursued with eagerness and soon discovered two Indians kindling a fire; these they instantly dispatched, and finding some plunder with them, which they knew must have been taken from the Livingston house, they at once came to the conclusion that these two had been sent forward to hunt for provisions and that the others were yet behind with the prisoners." (8)

Now since Stone Gap was closer to Lee County than any other Indian trail crossing the Cumberlands, and since Benge had come this way with Mrs. Scott in 1785, it is hardly likely that Hobbs would have gone beyond this pass up the North Fork of Powell to the present town of Norton. Further-



more, Peter and Henry Livingston, together with another posse, had come around through Russell County to examine other trails.

Summers states that Benge was most likely slain at the present town of Dorchester, about three miles northwest of Norton. (9) However, Dorechester is about as far from Stone Mountain as Norton is.

Further on this point, Andrew Lewis, military officer in command of the southwestern Virginia militia, wrote to the governor of Virginia as follows: "By their (Benge and party) passing through the Stone Gap in Powell's Mountain suspect they were southern Indians. (10)

It seems that Andrew Lewis knew that there was a Stone Gap, but he was not acquainted well enough with the geography of the southwestern mountains of Virginia to know that Powell Mountain has no Stone Gap but that Stone Mountain, the next range north of Powell, does have one.

As to the trail Benge took after his camping at the foot of Powell Mountain (southern side) April 7, he must have gone down Hunter's Valley, alongside the southern foot of Powell Mountain until striking Cove Creek, thence up it to its headwaters, through Maple Gap, down Cracker's Neck to the present town of Big Stone Gap, and thence to the entrance of Stone Gap in Stone Mountain.

Now let's view the side as described by the last surviving member of the Hobbs' party, Dr. James Huff of Kentucky, in an interview 1846 for the Jacksonian, a newspaper published in Abingdon and filed in the Draper Papers.'" (11)

"Some time in the month of April 1794, just before daylight, a man by the name of John Henderson rode up to Yokum Station in Powell Valley and informed the station that Indians had taken the wives of Peter and Henry Livingston . . . . .

" . . . . .the writer has seen this spot where Benge was killed; it is one of those deep, dark mountain passes where the ridge on each side seems to reach the clouds, and the center of the deep, gloomy valley below is covered with large masses of unshaken rocks, with a wild furious stream, tumbling and rolling in the midst.

"These backwoodsmen sat but a short while in their hiding places until two of them highest up the precipice,



V. Hobbs and J. Van Bever saw an Indian and the wife of Peter Livingston coming." (12)

However, it was not Peter's wife but Henry's.

Now there is no such rugged terrain as described here just south of Norton: no great boulders. no great gorge; no cliffs, merely a small bump of stone which is claimed to be Hobbs' hiding place; no stream which could be called a furious one, just a small branch which today is called Benge's Branch. Now it must be recognized that there were no white settlers in Norton until about 1890, nearly a hundred years after Benge's demise; consequently, traditional stories, and the failure to study facts as recorded in reports of responsible persons of the time, have led to errors in designating the scene of Benge's death.

Hobbs and Van Bever reached Elizabeth soon after she was struck with the tomahawk, an hour later she regained consciousness.

Shortly thereafter her husband, Peter, together with Henry, arrived on the scene, happy that their wives had been rescued. Susanna, Henry's wife (his second wife) had been in the group immediately led by Benge.

As soon as Elizabeth was recovered sufficiently to travel, she and her kinsmen started back home.

Settlers on the frontier rejoiced when they heard that the renegade, half-breed Chief Benge was dead.

Arthur Campbell, in a letter to the governor of Virginia dated April 29, 1794, said, "I send the scalp of Captain (Why he used the term captain, it is not known) Bench, that noted murderer, as requested by Lieutenant Hobbs, to your excellency. . . . as a proof that he is no more, and of the activity and good conduct of Lieutenant Hobbs, in killing him and relieving the prisoners. Could it be spared from our treasury, I would beg leave to hint that a present of a neat rifle to Mr. Hobbs would be accepted as a reward for his services, and the executive may rest assured that it would serve as a stimulus for future exertions against the enemy." (13)

In accordance with the recommendations of Colonel Campbell, the General Assembly of Virginia voted Mr. Hobbs a "beautiful silver-mounted rifle."

Although there was gladness at the Livingston home on the Holston over the return of the captives and the killing of the notorious Chief Benge, it wasn't long



until the event brought a threat of war from the Cherokees and the frontier was again thrown into panic.

Of the pending trouble Arthur Campbell wrote the governor, April 2, 1794, "Although this success (the killing of Benge) lessens the apprehensions of the inhabitants, yet from the declared intention of the Chickamooga party of the Cherokees to go to war, and their actually having lately 200 warriors out in small parties, the western settlements of this county and the adjoining settlements in Lee County talk of moving off it there is not some protection by the government afforded them." (14)

The Virginia government seemed in no hurry to send military help to the settlers of Washington and Lee Counties and consequently the state of fear of revenge attacks grew more tense. In regard to the situation Arthur Campbell tried again.

On July 9th, the same year, he wrote as follows:

"By intelligence from Knoxville, the uncle of Capt. Bench is out with thirty warriors to take revenge in Virginia. The necessity of having some men on duty near Moccison Gap, the former place of his haunts, and now we suppose of his avengers, seems urgent. Were Captain Lewis' company so arranged as to cover that settlement, and he be active in ranging the woods, it might in a degree appease the fears of the inhabitants. That part of Lee County which turned out so cleverly under Lieutenant Hobbs in pursuit of Bench, is altogether exposed; that is, they have no part of the guard on duty nearer than forty miles. My own conjecture is that, Hobbs and his friends may be the sufferers. All late accounts say that the whole of the lower Cherokees are for war." (15)

The revenge threat, however, failed to mature and, to the joy of the settlers, Benge's was the last invasion by a marauding Indian band on this, Virginia's last, frontier.

### Footnotes

1. Will book 1, p. 73 Abingdon court records
2. Summers, L. P. Annals of Southwest Virginia
3. Cole, Charles B.; Life of Wilburn Waters
4. Calendar Virginia State Papers, Vol. 7, pp. 111-112
5. Summers, L. P. Annals Southwest Virginia



6. Draper, L. C.: 12CC60
7. Virginia State Papers
8. Summers, L. P., History of Southwest Virginia, pp. 441-442 further quoting Sharp's MS.
9. Ibid p .441
10. Virginia State Papers, Vol. 7, p. 115
11. Draper 12CC60
12. Ibid
13. Virginia State Papers Vol. 7, p. 118
14. Ibid. Vol. 1 pp 117-118
15. Ibid, pp 210

## ST. MARIE ON THE CLINCH

By: Emory L. Hamilton

On December 1, 1951, in company with the late James Taylor Adams, I visited "Sugar Hill" overlooking the town of St. Paul, Virginia, to what is unquestionably the oldest house in Wise County, and probably the only one to have ever been occupied by European Royalty--the home of Baron Francois Pierre De Tubouef.

The place was reached by a two mile section of poorly kept and seldom traveled secondary road, and a mile of red clay. I would not risk the car all the way, but parked it on the roadside and we slogged the rest of the way through red clay mud, sometimes leaving the road altogether and picking our way through thickets of undergrowth strange to other sections of Wise County, such as Osage Orange, Honey Locust and Box Elder.

The house located at the extreme of a high finger of land jutting out from Sandy Ridge, is set atop a bluff overlooking Clinch River, and is not perhaps greatly changed since the days of the Baron's occupancy, still retaining port-holes on the second floor as a defense against marauding Indians.



The topography of the country is such that viewed from St. Paul the house appears on the south of Clinch River and in Russell County. The river, however, makes a sudden bend between the hills and so close the land hugged walls that one loses sight of the twisting course of the waters when viewed from the escarpment above. Actually the house is on the northwest side of the river and in Wise County.

In the year 1772, (1) John English established settlement on this spot, built a house there and recorded his deed to 119 acres on June 26, 1786, in Russell County, Virginia. (2)

On Christmas day 1782 the Indians attacked the home of John English, but the family apparently suffered no harm during this foray. On January 29, 1783, Col. Arthur Campbell, writing to the Governor of Virginia makes this statement:

"On Christmas day 1782 the Indians attacked the home of John Ingles on Clinch, in this county, scalped and otherwise grievously wounded a young man of the name of Cox, overtaken in ye field. The second day afterwards as the enemy was making off toward the head of Sandy River, (they) came on three hunters, two of whom they killed." (3)

English apparently lived in peace for a few years after this for there is no account that the Indians bothered him in the interim for 1782 until 1787, which is remarkable in that he was the only inhabitant living in the bounds of present Wise County across from Castlewood on a lonely mountain top and distant some three or four miles from the forts on the south side of Clinch. Fifteen years after he had settled on his claim all the horror and tragedy of a savage race was brought home to the man who had dared the wilderness to carve out his home and his destiny. On March 8, 1787, the red denizens of the forest struck in all their barbarity, killing Molly the wife of John English, and his two little sons. Alexander Barnett, County Lieutenant of Russell County, wrote to the Governor of Virginia, on March 26, 1787, saying:

"That on the 8th day of the present month the Indians made an attempt on Cassell's Woods, on Clinch, and killed a woman and two children, and made their escape on a manner that they could not follow with any certainty." (4)

Again on May 19, 1787, Alexander Barnette again writing to the Governor, says:

"The last information is that John Inglishe's family killed in Cassell's Woods, on Clinch, in March last, were scalped,



and that their scalps were carried into one of the towns on Hiwassee." (5)

Whether John English lived on at his old home after his family was destroyed is not known. In 1791 he sold the place to the French Baron who moved on the hill in that same year. John English, daughter of John, and whether she was the only surviving child is not known, but no other children qualified as heir to his estate.

Some have written that Baron De Tubouef having cast his lot with a losing political party was forced to flee his native land to London, England. While residing in London he supposedly invested in town property which he traded to one Richard Smith for 55,000 acres of land in the western wilderness of Virginia. He did, according to record, purchase his land from Smith, but of his residence in London I question on this recorded fact:

"At a court held for Washington County, Virginia, on the 20th day of October, 1795, an instrument of writing dated 30 May, 1791, and signed by Louis, King of France, purporting to be a safe conduct for Francois Pierre De Tubouef was presented in court and ordered to be recorded." If he was a resident of London why was it necessary to get a safe conduct passage from the King of France?

De Tubouef sailed on the Nee La Petite Nannette, which from the name, was unquestionably a French ship, and was under the command of Captain Pitahugo. With him was his son (Alexander) his niece (Louise Duchesne), and five servants. Their destination was Richmond, Virginia.

Russell County, Virginia, Deed Book 4, page 48, dated September 30, 1798, refers to Richard Smith, thusly: "Formerly of the City and County of New London, in the state of Connecticut, and late of the City, County and State of New York, and resident at Waddon, in the county of Surry and the Kingdom of England, but now resident in the said New York." Richard Smith was one of the early land speculators and owned vast acreages in the western wilderness of Virginia, selling only a portion of his large speculations to the Baron.

Baron De Tubouef is said to have lived at Dickensonville a short time after his arrival in 1791. Possibly, while living here, he negotiated for the tract of 119 acres from John English, which tract was in the bounds of the French



lands, but title being older than that belonging to the Frenchman.

In a lawsuit instituted in Russell County, Virginia, in 1859, by Dale Carter against James Campbell, et als, Jonathan Osborne testified that he worked for the French Baron De Tuboeuf at the time he was 21 years of age, and that De Tuboeuf bought the property from John English because of an improvement thereon, and lived on the said property.

De Tubouef was residing upon the land purchased from John English in January, 1792, as evidenced by a letter to the governor, where in he states that he had made settlement thereon in that month, and that one of his friends was departing that moment to receive the six hundred pounds sterling being loaned him by the state for the purpose of bringing French immigrants to his settlement upon the Clinch.

Here the state set a precedent probably unknown before or since, in lending money to an individual for property improvement. Soon, however, the Baron had his six hundred pounds sterling to further his settlement, but which in the end was to cost him his life.

During 1792 a number of improvements had been made, including a wagon road from the Russell Courthouse (then at Dickensonville), to the plantation. Also a body of soldiers had been stationed two miles away, which according to the Baron's letters had saved them from the Indian incursions, since being on the right side of the river Clinch they were more open to attack than those on the opposite side in proximity to Moore's and Russell's forts.

Despite these cheering aspects all was not sunshine at St. Marie on the Clinch, for by October of 1792, some of the immigrants had deserted and in the words of the Baron to the Governor: 'I have received the six hundred pounds you granted me and nothing will be wanting to be prosperity of my settlement if the greater part of my companions, too easily dismayed, yielding to a false terror, and tired at the difficulties met at the beginning had not abandoned me.'

In this letter he asks the Governor and the Legislature for a Certificate ascertaining the true state of the country, the fertility of the soil, the legitimacy of his ownership, the facility of keeping ones self from the Indians as evidenced



by his residence there for the past year, in order to encourage more immigrants to his settlement. Reading between the lines in the full context of this letter found in the State Papers one senses a deep faith and appreciation in his adopted land by this energetic Frenchman.

Despite the adversities he complains of, Baron De Tubouef, had been cheered by the fact that his youngest son, Francois De Tubouef and two French families had joined him in April, 1793.

Apparently life at St. Marie moved along at a normal pace until April, 1795, the day an election was held in Russell County to elect Representatives. The story of that day is best told by Alexander De Tubouef, oldest son of the Baron, in a deposition taken by John Tate, a Justice of the Peace for Russell County, Virginia, on the 3rd day of May, 1796, wherein he states:

"That on the day of the election held for Representatives in said County, in the year one thousand seven hundred ninety-five, that two men passing by the name of Brown and Barrow, came to the house of this deponent's father, and, after being invited and partaking of dinner, and after staying some time and loitering about, taking the opportunity as the father of the deponent turned his face from them, one of the said men, which was Brown, gave him a stroke with a gun which he had in his hand, and the cock of the lock sunk appearingly through his skull, which sunk him motionless, and in a short time expired. The aforesaid, not sufficing their fury, with an attempt they proceeded to murder the whole family, and fell upon the said deponent with a club, and after receiving several wounds made his escape out of the house, and Miss Duchesne at the same time dangerously wounded. A servant maid attempting from the alarm to cross the river got drowned, and also the house being robbed and the trunks broke open and plundered."

The younger son, Francois, might have been serving in the Continental Army at this time. A letter sent from the Baron to the Governor, by his son, Francois, dated August 16, 1793, informs the Governor that his son desires to continue the military service started in France for his new country, and that he will go down to General Washington to solicit "employ" in the troops, and asks for the Governor's recommendation.

The murderers of Baron De Tubouef made their escape



into the Illinois territory. A reward of \$500 was posted for their apprehension, which reward notice gives a detailed description of each, and lists their names as John Brown, alias Bond, and Richard Barrow.

The governor commissioned James McFarland and Lieutenant David Ward to go to the Illinois country to seek their apprehension. This, they apparently succeeded in doing, but they broke custody in the Illinois Territory at a place called New Design in May, 1796, and were never seemingly recaptured. Three men by the name of Payne, Roberts, and Best were lodged in jail in Washington County as accessory to the murder and robbery of Baron De Tubouef and brought to trial in that county.

What happened to the French immigrants, the sons of Baron De Tubouef and St. Marie on the Clinch? The French land was sold by the Commonwealth of Va., in 1854 to satisfy the mortgage at a public auction held at the home of Hiram H. Kilgore, opposite the present Clinch Valley College.

The "safe Passage" granted to Baron De Tueouef by the King of France, was for himself, his son Alexander, his niece Louise Duchesne, and five servants. The younger son, Francois Pierre with two French families joined the settlement in April, 1793. So far, I have nowhere found the names of the five servants. Besides the niece, Louise Duchesne, five other people were on security for the six hundred pounds sterling, and it must be assumed these came with the Baron from France and may or may not have been the five servants referred to. They were: Louise LeChartier, Charles De Spada, Euseba De La Planche, Caesar Le Febore, and Simon Perchet. Of these five I have been able to account for four:

Charles De Spada, married Louise Duchesne, niece of the Baron, and died in Baltimore, Maryland, in 1819, or thereabouts. He was born in Spada in the Kingdom of France, September 24, 1752.

Louise Le Cartier died in Abingdon, Virginia, in 1803, and left as her heirs Charles De Spada and Euseba De La Planche, both of whom were living at that time in Abingdon. Caesar Le Febore died at Abington, and his will recorded June 18, 1805. leaves his estate to brothers and sisters in France.

Alexander and Francois Pierre De Tubouef, sons of the



Baron, returned to France in 1803, and thus ends the tragic story of a dream . . . St. Marie on the Clinch.

The story of "Sugar Hill" picks up where St. Marie ends, and it, too, is a romantic interlude of history. While John English had sold his land to Baron De Tubouef, it seems he had not yet made a deed at the time of De Tubouef's untimely death. After the death of the Baron it appears that Louise Duchesne had, in some way, held the land in possession. In a clemency suit instituted in Russell county court with De Tubouef versus Louise Duchesne, Charles Bickley was appointed as Guardian to represent young Francois Pierre De Tubouef, and qualified for the same at the July term of court 1796. Alexander De Tubouef, the older son, was appointed as administrator of his father's estate at the June term of court 1799. In a court order dated July 25, 1797, Charles Bickley was ordered to pay John English 60 pounds from the sale of the estate of De Tubouef. From this order one may suppose the reason English had not made the deed to the land was due to the lack of payment for the same by Baron De Tubouef.

John English was dead shortly after the date of the above order as evidenced by the probation of his will August 22, 1797. Jessee Fraley and Mary, his wife, who were heirs of John English, conveyed the property to the sons of De Tubouef by deed dated June 5, 1799. The sons of De Tubouef, in turn, conveyed their interest to Louise Duchesne by deed dated August 27, 1799. After her marriage to Charles De Spada they sold the land to Basil S. Elder of Baltimore, and the said Elder sold it to Charles Bickley by deed dated August 17, 1815. Charles Bickley and Delilah, his wife, sold to Sebastian H. Bickley, son of Charles, by deed dated March 4, 1821.

From this point on "Old Hattler Bickley" as Sebastian was locally known, proceeded to enlarge the farm by buying additional adjoining land, and eventually with the help of slave labor, developed a very fine cattle and grain farm.

Leading off from the southern slope of the hill below the house was a large grove of sugar maples which he developed into a thriving sugar industry, the first, and perhaps the only maple sugar industry in Wise County. On the southern slope also was located the sugar camp, where the sap was collected and boiled down in vats much like the molasses pan until it



crystallized into sugar. The sugar was sold to the surrounding country and at the Bickley Mills trading center at Castlewoods. Though long in disuse, traces of the road leading from the house to the sugar camp may still be seen, and ashes or charcoal from the sugar furnaces may be traced in the soil. From "Old Hattler's" sugar operations the place became known as Sugar Hill, the name by which it is still known; none now living in the vicinity having ever heard of such a place as "Saint Marie on the Clinch."

After the death of Hattler Bickley the place passed to his son, Charles, who lived out his life there, and with his wife, lies buried just west of the old house.

The question now, who really did build this old home? There is a tradition that the original house burned, and that Hattler Bickley built the present house. I question this story for three reasons: First, the details of its burning being rather fantastic in that fire broke out across the river and that sparks blown across by the wind fired a haystack and the conflagration eventually spread to the house. Secondly, there are port holes in the house under the upstairs windows (although weatherboarded over now). Why would Hattler Bickley build a house with port holes for protection against the Indians a full quarter century after the last Indian raid in this territory? When his father, Charles Bickley sold to him in 1821 the deed reads in part: "Sold with buildings, etc., thereunto belonging", showing that it did have buildings then. And last, but not least, I think the condition of the house itself bears witness to its extreme age. The sleepers under the house, which, when built were of logs about eighteen inches in diameter, but in some places they have dry rotted away to a bare six inches in diameter, or less.

The house measures roughly 24 x 32 feet. The main part is a two story with a large kitchen-dining section of one story running off from the south end. The fireplaces are four downstairs and two up. Three of the downstairs fireplaces are in the same chimney, built cornerwise, or triangular. The ones on the ground floor being six feet wide and those on the second floor four feet wide. The chimneys are built of hand burned brick and are huge in size. The flooring and ceiling is of yellow poplar about six inches wide, and has, of course, been added in more recent years, as well as the weatherboarding on the exterior.



1. Washington County, Virginia, Land Entry Book 1
2. Russell County Land Entry Book 1.
3. Calendar Virginia State Papers, Vol. III, p. 424.
4. Ibid, Vol IV, p. 262.

## RUFUS A. AYERS, PROMOTER OF SOUTHWEST VIRGINIA

By: Nancy Harman

Rufus A. Ayers was born on May 20, 1849, in Bedford County, Virginia. (1) After living there for a few years, he and his family set out for Texas to make a new home. However, on the way, the family stopped off at Goodson, now Bristol, to visit. They liked that section of the country so well that they decided to stay there. Ayers later came to Southwest Virginia, in the Big Stone Gap vicinity. So really it was quite by chance that he came to settle in this area. (2)

Rufus attended Goodson Academy, until he ran away to join the Confederate Army, when he was fifteen years old. After the war he came back and settled at Estilville, now Gate City, where he engaged in farming. However, he gave this up after a rather short time.

Then he went into the mercantile business. He spent a few rather unsuccessful years in this business before finally deciding to devote his time to the study of law. In my opinion, this was a very wise decision, judging from the outstanding law career which followed. In 1872, having completed his law study, he was admitted to the bar. (3) About two years later, he became Commonwealth's Attorney of Scott County. It was in his role as a lawyer that Ayers won deep respect from people all over Virginia and was praised by people all over the nation. The most famous case in which he was involved was the Virginia Stage Debt Question. (4) This case involved grievances that certain bondholders had against the state of Virginia. There raged



bitter legal battles between Virginia and her bondholders. Ayers fought the case to the Federal Courts, and was finally arrested for contempt of court by Judge Bond of Maryland. He was sent to jail, but was freed by a writ of "habeas corpus". The people of Virginia praised Ayers highly for the way he upheld the law of Virginia in this case. He had more to do with the settlement of this case than any other man involved in it. This case probably had more to do with Ayers' success as a lawyer than any other one thing throughout his law career. (5) He set up law offices in both Gate City and Big Stone Gap where he and his son, Harry J. Ayers, were in joint practice. They had an outstanding firm and were often called into many important area cases, such as the Shoemaker Will Case.

Ayers was prominent in politics, serving a term as attorney-general of Virginia. It was at this time that people began calling him "General" Ayers. Contrary to what many people probably think, he was not given this name because of his being a military man, but instead, because of his being attorney-general. (6)

He was a prominent Virginia democrat during his lifetime. After his term as attorney-general, Ayers was persuaded to run for governor of Virginia. He was nominated and accepted on the Democratic ticket, but after a few weeks, he dropped out of the race and decided to devote his time to the development of Southwest Virginia. (7) In my opinion, Ayers was never really a politician at heart. I think he participated in politics mainly for the advantage of promoting his interests in Southwest Virginia and its development. There were possibly several ways in which he could have used his political influence to the advantage of Southwest Virginia, such as for the purpose of obtaining railroad franchises and similar things for the area.

After leaving politics, (I suspect it is incorrect for me to say he actually left because his influence was always there) he began his efforts toward developing Southwest Virginia's potentialities.

One of the very early achievements of Ayers was his plans for the development of brick plants, (8), one of which he constructed near Big Stone Gap. Although he was a lawyer and promoter, he still had a keen eye for business. This can be illustrated by the so-called Brick Enterprise,



an agreement between Samuel L. Parsons of Louisville and General Ayers, by which the former purchased the brick machine, and agreed to put it in working condition at once. (9)

Ayers probably made his most notable achievements in the promotion of the coke and coal industry and in the building of railroads. He is given credit for being the first active promoter in the Virginia coal fields. (10) He was largely responsible, through his hard work and active promotion, for bringing iron industrialists to this area. Because of various coal and coke exhibits, planned and made possible by Ayers, British industrialists became interested in the potentialities of Southwest Virginia. Here, I might mention that perhaps Ayers had a greater influence on the British iron industrialists than Andrew Carnegie because, despite Carnegie's protests, the British Iron and Steel Institute came South, after having seen the exhibits planned by Ayers. The coal and coke industry of this area was also promoted by Ayer's suggestion of having coal and coke exhibits from this area shown at the World's Fair of 1891.

Ayers was also instrumental in the founding of the Virginia Coal and Iron Company and served on its board of directors for many years. Besides working with the Virginia Coal and Iron Company, he helped organize and served with several other companies. Some of these were the Appalachia Steel and Iron Company and the Virginia, Tennessee, and Carolina Steel and Iron Company. (11)

Ayers made his greatest contributions to the town of Big Stone Gap through the Big Stone Gap Improvement Committee, of which he was the organizer and president. This committee was instrumental in the development of all industry in and around Big Stone Gap. This committee is said to have fathered the coke furnaces, electric lights, and water works and to have heartily supported the railway, interstate tunnel, Mountain Park Association, planing mills, and brick plants. (12) Ayers worked untiringly through this Committee, though he sometimes became discouraged and accused the people of Southwest Virginia of not really appreciating the work of the Committee. However, he never lost interest in these people and their needs.

In 1891, Ayers tried to put into effect the outdoor recreation program now used on both a state and national level. This idea took the form of an organization known as the Mountain Park Association.



James F. Fox, president of the Mountain Park Association wrote,

"I was put in this position without my knowledge, and General Ayers, who is the father of the Association will, after the annual meeting next May, be the president in name as he has been in reality, having acquired the land for us on the most favorable terms from Mr. Hagan at a time when the Norfolk and Western Railway people (who always know a good thing when they see it) were bidding high for it for a summer resort, directed the survey and made all other necessary arrangements." (13)

The work of the Mountain Park Association had just begun when the depression of 1893 struck. Therefore, the Association's plans were disrupted.

Ayers was very distressed at the stagnation of American business and industry during the depression of 1893. He believed that the main trouble lay in the Sherman Silver Purchase Bill, and he was in favor of the repeal of this bill. It was at this time that he was very outspoken as to his feelings in the Presidential election. He once said, "I change my mind as often as anyone. I have always been a Cleveland man, but I must confess that I am beginning to change my mind." (14)

Usually, as General Ayers' opinions and sentiments changed, so Southwest Virginia's sentiments changed.

General Ayers exerted a great influence on the governmental and political affairs of Big Stone Gap and Southwest Virginia. He served for a time as a trustee or town councilman of Big Stone Gap. During this time he introduced a resolution that would fix the salaries of town councilmen at \$1.25 per twelve months. Thus Ayers was responsible for bringing about the first act aimed at fixing salaries of the Big Stone Gap town officials.

General Ayers was usually selected to represent the people of Southwest Virginia in both state and national political matters. He was clerk in the House of Delegates from 1875 through 1879 and was supervisor of the census of the fifth district of Virginia in 1880. (15) He also served as a member of the Democratic Executive Committee of Virginia and was a delegate to the National Convention in 1884 and to the Constitutional Convention in 1901-02. While involved in these various political matters, he often succeeded in



reversing expected Republican majorities to Democratic victories. He ran for Congress in 1912, but was defeated by C. Bascom Slemmons. This was the first time he had run for an office since his term as attorney-general of Virginia.

Ayers was interested in the farmers of the area, as well as the business and industrial people. He was president of the Committee on Permanent Organization, the purpose of which was to plan a fair at Big Stone Gap. (16) He was very much in favor of a fair because he thought that the farmers of the area needed an opportunity to show evidence of the hard work they were doing. Probably, the main reason Ayers was interested in the farmers was because he himself had engaged in farming for a few years. In fact, even after he gave up farming as an occupation, he maintained a 2,500 acre farm and estate at Holston Springs and still traded cattle and other livestock.

Besides his interest in industrial, civic, and political affairs, Ayers also dealt in real estate. He once traded tract of coal land to E. H. Ould for all of Ould's real estate in Big Stone Gap. After this trade many people in the Big Stone Gap area said, "Ayers' faith in Big Stone Gap has never wavered for a moment." (17)

Ayers often compared Big Stone Gap to Connellsville, Pennsylvania. He said that any man who had visited Connellsville in 1881 and could see its great growth and prosperity would have no doubt about the future of Big Stone Gap. Besides buying all available real estate, Ayers also provided for the construction of many new houses and building in and around Big Stone Gap. In 1891, General Ayers was one of the two largest taxpayers on building in Big Stone Gap.

Rufus A. Ayers also played a part in the financial affairs of Southwest Virginia. He established the bank of Gate City, then the only bank between Bristol and Cumberland Gap. He also established and ran the R. A. Ayers and Company Bank at Big Stone Gap and had dealings in practically all of Big Stone Gap's financial affairs.

Besides his work in the coal industry and in railroad, Ayers made other contributions, perhaps less well-known ones, to Southwest Virginia. He was responsible for the construction of a tannery in Big Stone Gap. Although the tannery was very small, it produced the highest quality of leather, which, because of its good quality, always commanded market prices. Ayers later sold this tannery



to U. S. Leather Company in New York. The extension of electric power to Big Stone Gap was also greatly influenced by Ayers.

General Ayers' life had still another facet; he was a very good public speaker. He was very often called upon to speak at various club meetings, banquets, and political meetings. His speeches no doubt made a deep impression on his listeners because he was very often quoted.

Besides speaking at meetings, he always gave the commencement address at Gladeville College, and was called on to make speeches at King College and other area schools. He was generally regarded as a literary man, as well as a promoter and progressive.

Indeed it seems as if he were a "jack of all trades" because he influenced (in the positive sense of the word) practically everything that went on in Southwest Virginia during his life.

On May 14, 1926, General Rufus A. Ayers, after many years of hard work as a promoter of Southwest Virginia, died at the age of seventy-seven. He died in a Radford hospital, having suffered a general breakdown in health. His death was greatly mourned by Southwest Virginians, as well as by all Virginia.

General Rufus A. Ayers, Wise County's great pioneer developer, had been the leading figure in the affairs of the county for over half a century. It is said that no one man ever transacted more business deals involving the transfer of vast boundaries of mineral lands and location of railroads in this part of Virginia. (18) He had also been responsible for all early business enterprises in this area.

Ayers has been described in many ways. He has been called a self-made man, a man of affairs, and a broadminded and liberal man. In my opinion, he could be called all these and more. I feel safe in saying that he probably had a stronger hold on the people of Southwest Virginia than anyone before or since him. He was able to keep this hold because of his undying faith and interest in these people and their wishes and needs.

1. Dabney, Virginius. Richmond Times Dispatch, April 30, 1939.

2. Addington, Luther F. The Story of Wise County



(Centennial Committee and School Board of Wise County)  
1956, p. 213.

3. "Big Stone Gap Post", May, 1926.
4. Op. Cit., Addington, pp. 216-217 and "Post."
5. Ibid.
6. Addington, op. cit., P. 217.
7. Op Cit., "Post"
8. "Post", op. cit.
9. Ibid.
10. Addington, op. cit., p. 213
11. "Post", op. cit.
12. Ibid.
13. "Post", January 2, 1890.
14. "Post", Election Issue, 1892.
15. "Post", May, 1926.
16. "Post", op. cit.
17. "Post, op. cit.
18. "Post," op. cit.

## THE MELUNGEONS

By: Bonnie Ball

A generation ago census records of certain mountainous counties of Virginia, Tennessee, Kentucky, Carolina, and



others proved somewhat confusing. This was due to the presence of a strange group of people whose origin was, and has remained, one of the deepest and most fascinating mysteries of American ethnology.

The "Melungeons" who were called "ramps" in certain areas by their neighbors, have characteristics that range from those of the whites and American Indians to Orientals or Negroes. This variation prevented a definite race classification, and has also given rise to numerous theories concerning their origin.

Some had dark, oily skin, kinky hair, upturned noses and dark stoic eyes. Others, even in the same family, had coarse bronzed skin, with straight black hair. Still others close relatives differed little from their white neighbors, perhaps having brown or light, fuzzy hair, fair or medium skin, and dark blue or gray eyes. Then there were others among them that had smooth, yellowish skin, curly brown or black hair, and dreamy, almost Oriental eyes.

It would be impossible to make any accurate estimate of how many such people were scattered throughout the mountains of the Southern Appalachians, but it can be assumed that their number fifty years ago would have run into at least five digits.

According to Bruce Crawford, a former newspaperman, and leading student of ethnology of the Appalachian area, the Melungeons were officially recognized about 1887 and given a separate legal existence under the title of "Croatan Indians" on the theory of their descent from Raleigh's Lost Colony of Roanoke Island (North Carolina), a convenient means of disposal, but hardly satisfying to the inquisitive historian.

The older Melungeons insisted that they were Portuguese. I have known the Melungeons from childhood, when three families lived as tenants on my father's farm in Southwestern Virginia. Their children have been my pupils; and I have done first-hand research on their traits, customs, and past, but can give here only the proposed theories of their origin.

Mr. Crawford's research revealed that when John Sevier organized the state of Franklin (Tennessee) there was a colony of "dark-skinned, reddish-brown complexioned people supposed to be of Moorish descent." They were neither Indians nor Negroes, but claimed to be Portuguese.

There is a doubtful theory that the Melungeon was a



product of frontier warfare when white blood was fused with the Indian captor's and that of the Negro slave.

There also persist stories (that are recorded in history) that DeSoto visited Southwestern Virginia in the sixteenth century by way of a long chain of mountains leading into Tennessee. One ridge known as "Newman's Ridge" (which could have been "New Man's Ridge") was once the home of a teeming colony of Melungeons who were strongly believed to have descended from members of DeSoto's party lost or captured there.

In both Carolinas Melungeons were denied privileges usually granted to white people. For that reason many migrated to Tennessee where the courts ruled that they were not Negroes.

Traditions still persist that the Melungeons were descendants of the ancient Phoenicians who migrated from Carthage to Morocco, whence they crossed the Atlantic before the American Revolution and settled in North Carolina. If this theory can be accepted, they were pure Carthaginian, and not a mixed race.

In weighing this last statement it is interesting to note that the Moors of Tennessee called themselves Portuguese, that the Moors of North Carolina came from Portugal, and that a generation ago the Melungeons called themselves Portuguese.

Yet there are factors that are puzzling in these assumptions. Such common surnames among them as Collins, Gipson (Gibson), Sexton, Bolen, Goins, and Mullens suggest no Phoenician background. And there is nothing about the word "ramp" to suggest a shy, usually inoffensive race of people. Neither is there any known reason for usage of the word "Melungeon" which is believed to have been derived from the French word "melange," meaning mixture.

The Melungeons were sometimes shy and reticent toward outlanders, but amiable with neighbors. They were loyal to their kin and employers. While they were fond of whiskey few were boisterous or malicious. I recall a story often told by my father, who was reared only a few miles from Newman's Ridge, about "Big Mahala Mullens" who lived on the Virginia-Tennessee state line. She grew so obese that she was unable to leave her house, and sat at the door all day selling whiskey to travelers. When she discovered the approach of revenue officials she waddled over to the



Virginia side of her house if they approached from the Tennessee side, and vice versa if from Virginia. The act was probably unnecessary, since the authorities could not have removed her from the house. When Mahala died the chimney was torn away in order that she could be removed for burial.

Practically all Melungeons preferred a care-free existence with members of their own clan. For many generations they seldom married outsiders, and virtually all families in each area were related. Nearly all Melungeons, young and old, chewed tobacco. They lived largely on bacon, corn pone, mush, and strong coffee. In early spring they gathered "crow's foot" from the woodlands, and "bear's lettuce" from spring braches, and ate them raw with salt. They liked wild fruits and berries to eat from the bush, but cared nothing for canning and preserving them. The holiday for Melungeon men was a week in late summer, after the crops were laid by, to be used for a ginseng expedition. No camping equipment was taken along except a water pail, knives, and a frying pan. They slept under the cliffs.

No fisherman could compete with the Melungeon. He simply waded into the stream, shoes and all, and searched with his fingers for fish hiding under stones. In no time he emerged with a nice string of fish.

Theirs was a hardy race, and seldom did they rely on a doctor. They applied many home remedies for injuries and brewed herb teas. Childbirth was a casual matter, usually attended by a mountain midwife. Babies, as a rule, grew and thrived without any pretense of comfort or sanitation.

Their religion was of the simple Protestant type. They often attended their neighbors' churches, and occasionally had a patriarch-preacher in their group. They learned some of the old ballads and gospel songs from memory, for few of them could read or write. They accepted attendance at school, in most cases, as an "unnecessary evil." Church picnics were always attended by Melungeon boys, but my mother once had a difficult time persuading young Willie that he must have a bath and wear a suit in order to participate in a children's day program. So he appeared, grinning broadly, in my brother's hand-me-down.

Then came industry to the Appalachians--coal, timbering, and railroads. The change was slow. World War I drew Melungeons into industry as well as military service. Coal



towns grew up rapidly, and the Melungeon, like other tenant farmers, loaded up his few belongings on a wagon and headed for the "public works." A few remained behind and bought little hillside farms. For some reason their number appears to have decreased sharply in the past three decades, probably a result of long intermarriage, or perhaps many have been lost in white blood. Soon they may become just a legend- a lost race.

Ohio Valley Folk Research Project  
Publications released in 1960 as of 6-15-1960.

1. "Sage's Purple Passion" by Ben Hayes, New Series No. 37
2. "Hair Balls and the Witch" by Melissa Hughes", New Series No. 38
3. "Uncle Remus in Syracuse" by Lawrence S. Thompson, New Series No. 39
4. "Hewitt, the Hermit" by James Emmitt, New Series No. 40
5. "Tobacco Folklore" by Lawrence S. Thompson, New Series No. 41
6. "Ox, Capon and the Hare" by Yancy Yaddin, New Series No. 42
7. "Hugh Mosher, the Fifer" by Robert L. Walden, New Series No. 43
8. "Control of Grasshoppers" by Raymond Embree, New Series No. 44
9. "The Lost Silver Mine" by Dr. Carl R. Bogardus, New Series No. 45
10. "Hog Drive to Evansville, 1879" by Elmer S. Elliott, New Series No. 46
11. "Johnny Appleseed" by Rosella Rice, New Series No. 47



12. "Squirrel Broth" by Merrill C. Gilfillan, New Series No. 48
13. "The Undertaker's Revenge" by Jean Dow New Series No. 49
14. "The Jackson County Madstones" by Dr. Gwyn Parry, New Series No. 50
15. "The Feast of Rosea" by Adlyn Keffer, New Series No. 51
16. "Song, Legend of Pa. and W. Va" by Keysner and Whiting, New Series No. 52
17. "Lazy Tom" by Ellen Margolis, New Series No. 53
18. "The Story of Nelson T. Gant" by Norris F. Schneider New Series No. 54
19. "The Big Blow" by Laessle Bemis, New Series No. 55

## LAFAYETTE MCMULLEN, COLORFUL SOUTHWEST VIRGINIAN

By: E. Frank Hilton

On May 18, in Bedford County, Virginia, John McMullen and his wife, Mary Wysong, became the proud parents of a son, christened Lafayette. John McMullen was of Scotch-Irish descent and his wife Mary of French descent. This boy is the subject of this narration.

John McMullen, Fayette's father, lived only one day's drive from Lynchburg, a thriving port and trading center on the James River. At an early date in the nineteenth century, he established a wagon train and coach line service from Bedford to Estillville, now Gate City, Virginia. The service hauled passengers, mail, and goods and did trading along the way. It is said a contract provided for the delivery and pick-up of the mail once each week.



The writer has been unable to establish definitely the date Fayette began the driving of a coach; it was possibly in 1822 when he was seventeen. He delighted in driving the coach which seated nine passengers and had provisions for over-flow passengers on deck with the drivers. He would decorate the harness and the coach with bells and tassels and used a trumpet to announce the coach's arrival in a town along the way. He made quite a figure with his turned-up hat brim, his arms stretched their length and his body swaying from side to side with the motion of the coach. He took delight in cracking his long whip above the heads of the horses without any intention of touching them. Upon his arrival at a town it was his practice to toss his lines to a waiting groom and alight among his many admirers.

The trip from Bedford to Estillville, traveled at the rate of thirty miles per day, took a week. Horses were changed at about each fifteen miles. The towns after leaving Bedford served by the coaches and wagons were Big Lick (now Roanoke), Salem, Christiansburg, Ingles Ferry (now Radford), Fort Chiswell, Wytheville, Royal Oak (now Marion), Blountville, and Estillville, as well as smaller places along the route. On the return trip products purchased along the way were delivered into Lynchburg to be marketed.

It can well be imagined that the roads at this early date were little more than cut out passways. One of the early travelers over this route, writing of the road from Wytheville to Abingdon, had this to say: "We left Wytheville in the early dawn of a most beautiful summer morning. It was a journey of only sixty miles but it would take two days to accomplish it. We wended our way slowly over a broken mountain road which had never been graded. We traveled in an old fashioned nine seated stage coach drawn by four horses, changed at long intervals. We lunched and rested at midday beneath the spreading trees, whose interwoven branches made network of the dark blue light of day. Waters from a gushing stream, the depth of whose source defied the heat of summer, quenched our thirst, while we inhaled the fragrance of rock hung flowers, the sweet briar and the health inspiring pine". Over roads of this kind thirty miles was considered a good day's journey.

Fayette had two brothers, Mathew and Andrew J., who



came also to Scott County as coach drivers and settled here about ten years after Fayette. Mathew married Eliza Jett, daughter of James Jett and granddaughter of Peter Levingston, an early pioneer settler of the area. He, with his family, left Scott County about 1860 to settle in Pettis County, Missouri. The brother Andrew J. married Polly Newland of Sullivan County, Tennessee, and remained in Scott County. He was a tanner by trade. He became a member of the first board of Supervisors when that office was established in 1870. Andrew J. had a son, Joe, who was killed as a Confederate soldier in the first battle of Manasses. Today, many of the Scott County McMullen, the Catrons, and the Couches are his descendants. Among these we may name Miss Georgia Jo Couch, our county Treasurer from 1956 to 1964.

Jonathan Wood II was the sheriff of Scott County at the time Fayette began his first trips by coach to the county. After a few years he married the sheriff's daughter, Mary (Polly) Wood, and immediately he began the accumulation of an estate. When only twenty years of age, he purchased from William L. Dunlaney a tract of land of 100 acres on Stock Creek. Later, on September 11, 1826, he purchased from Jonathan Wood the seventy-five acre farm adjoining the lands of William Houston on Big Moccasin Creek, and known as the Zachariah Salyer place. At his marriage to Mary (Polly) Wood, he used the name "Lafayette", the only time the writer has been able to find him using the long spelling of his name.

In October, following his marriage, Fayette McMullen began a long series to the county, state, and nation by his selection as a Captain in the Second Battalion, 124th Regiment of the State Militia. In the same month, also, was elected Commissioner of the Revenue of the South District, his first elective political office. A few years later he was elected a member of the then County Court in which he served two or three terms.

In 1832 Fayette and his wife were living on the south side of the North Fork of the Holston River on a farm later known as the Pen Henderson Place and near the present bridge on the Wadlow Gap road, then known as the Block Road. There he operated a ferry boat service near the present bridge site.



Fayette's series of elections to legislative offices began in 1832, when he was elected a member of the House of Delegates to represent Scott County. He served the following sessions in that Body: 1832/33, 1833/34, and 1845/36. His ambitions grew and in 1836 he was chosen to represent Scott, Lee, and Russell Counties in the State Senate and continued to serve for the sessions 1836/37, 1838 (Jan.), 1839 (Jan.), 1839/40, 1840/41, 1841/42, 1842/43, 1843/44, 1844/45, 1845/46, and 1846/47.

Evidently, he was equally successful in his military aspirations, begun in 1826. In 1837 he became a Major in the State Militia and in November, 1840 was advanced to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel.

Fayette McMullen's political ambitions broadened. In 1846, when he ran his first race for Congress, the Thirteenth District was composed of Smythe, Washington, Lee, Russell, Wythe, Tazewell, McDowell, Grayson, Carroll, Pulaski, and Scott Counties. In that race Andrew S. Fulton, the Whig candidate, defeated Fayette McMullen and Samuel E. Goodson, the Democratic candidates, by a plurality of six votes. Fayette's defeat resulted, no doubt, from the division in the ranks of the Democratic party that resulted in the two candidates. He took the defeat in a manly way and began immediately the mending of his fences in preparation for future races. Again the candidate of the Democrats in 1848, he defeated Mr. John B. George, the Whig, by a majority of more than two to one. He was re-elected in 1850 and 1852 without opposition and in 1854 he defeated Connelly F. Trigg, the Whig or American party candidate, without difficulty.

Henry A. Wise became the candidate for governor of Virginia in 1855. Mr. Wise, who had long been a democrat, joined the Whigs for a time and later returned to the Democratic fold. It is to be noted that Fayette McMullen and John Letcher failed to support candidate Wise. This refusal to support Mr. Wise may be the explanation of Fayette McMullen's refusal to run again for Congress in 1856.

By 1852 politics on the national level had become an interest of Fayette McMullen. In 1852 he attended the National Convention of the Democratic party in Baltimore; again in 1856 he was a delegate to the Convention held in Cincinnati, Ohio, in the Smith-Nixon Hall on Fifth Street.



The Virginia headquarters were in the Burnet House. The Cincinnati Daily Inquirer, of June 5, 1856, referred to the representation from Virginia as "One of which the State may justly be proud and to which the cause of Democracy, the Constitution, and the rights of the States may be safely confided". This issue of the paper refers to Fayette McMullen as a "popular and staunch member of Congress".

President Buchanan, in 1857, appointed Fayette McMullen to the Governorship of the Washington Territory—a position he held for two years. It is not known when Fayette first moved from Scott County to Marion. However, upon his return from Olympia, he brought with him his second wife. More about this later.

In 1861 Fayette ran for the Congress of the Confederate States, but lost to Walter Preston in the district by a majority of nineteen votes. Again a candidate in 1863, he was elected and served until the close of the War.

Successful and happy he had been in political life; however, his home life had not been a happy one. No children had been born to his marriage. He had been away much in Richmond and Washington, and his home was broken at many times. Numerous separations with his wife had occurred. Recorded in the Clerk's Office of Scott County on November 11, 1843, is a Separation Agreement in which Fayette had settled property on his wife, Polly, with her father, Jonathan Wood, as trustee. The property consisted of land, four slaves and other holdings. Recorded on June 10, 1845, however, is a document stating that this Separation Agreement, noted above, is rescinded and that Fayette and Polly were then living together as man and wife. Again, however, on November 17, 1853, a Separation Agreement is recorded in which Polly's brother, James H. Wood, is named trustee. This document settled a considerable amount of property on Polly and made provisions for her support until a divorce could be arranged. Five years later, the Territorial Legislature of Washington granted Fayette a divorce. In July, 1858, he married Mary Wood, daughter of Issac Wood of Thurston County, Washington, a lady of the same maiden name as his first wife. He received as a result of his divorce and second marriage a great deal of criticism at the hands of his political enemies. Some said he went west to get rid of one wife to be able to marry



another. This, of course, was not true for in the Separation Agreement of 1853 provisions were made for the divorce and until he went to Olympia years later he had never met the second Mrs. McMullen. Upon the completion of his services as Governor, he returned with Mrs. McMullen to Marion. She was held in high esteem in Marion. She made many donations to Marion Female College. When she died in 1889 and the body was returned to Marion for burial, the Board of Trustees, faculty, and students met the body at the depot and accompanied it in a procession to the Round Hill Cemetery.

Much could be said about McMullen's philosophy of government. It is easy to know he was a Democrat of the Jefferson-Jackson type. When the Civil War began he was a secessionist. A glimpse of his philosophy may be seen from the quotations below. Shanks, in his book The Secessionist refers to McMullen's letter of April 8, 1856 in which he refused to make the race for Congress—the only known copy of this letter is in the Archives of the Virginia State Library, in Richmond. It reads in Part, "Fellow citizens, it has been my habit for many years, whilst in the public service to address you by letter and in public speeches. I feel that it is not only my privilege but a duty I owe to you as a generous and confiding constituency, and to myself as the representative of free and independent people to address you. You will no doubt remember that during my late canvas as a candidate for your sufferidge (sic), I told you in every speech if the administration of the general government should by chance fall into the hands of the Abolitionist and they should carry out the measures of public policy to which they had pledged themselves, in and out of Congress, and to which to interdict by Congressional legislation the slave trade between the states, to repeal the fugitive slave law, to restore the Missouri restriction, and to refuse to admit into the union another state with a constitution recognizing slavery. That then these measures being consummated, there would then be a dissolution of the union. Nearly one half of my life has been spent in the council of my country, and at no time in my opinion has there been such danger of a wreck of the ship of state as at the present".

In Governor McMullen's letter to the Legislature of



Washington Territory, dated December 12, 1857, he outlined ways of protection from Indian troubles and refers to the military road from Fort Benton to Walla Walla. He refers to the many needs of the new commonwealth and in conclusion he writes: "My countrymen, if we wish to preserve this great and glorious union, which has recently been shaken to its very center and which I seriously fear is still in imminent danger, it can only be done by adhering to the constitution - that sacred instrument which will be to us as a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. We must at the same time practice and carry out the unmistakable doctrine of nonintervention, a doctrine which will and must be maintained so long as we recognize the doctrine of representative government."

The speech of McMullen that gives us much information about his views was one delivered extemporaneously before the U. S. Congress on April 29, 1852 and is of record in the Library of Congress. There was at the time pending the Homestead Bill granting to every settler 160 acres of the public lands in the middle and far west. In his speech in support of the bill he says: "It cannot be doubted that the speedy settlement of these lands constitute the true interest of the Republic. The wealth and strength of a country are its population and the best part of that population are the cultivators of the soil. Independent farmers are everywhere the basis of society and true friends of liberty. Suppose the poor man emigrates to the west and settles down on 160 acres of land, he can instead of paying one third of his labor to support the rich and indolent, appropriate it to the education of his children and the purchase of necessaries for his family. I beg the house and the country also to remember that genius and talent are not confined to those born and reared in brick houses and marble palaces. As bright and brilliant intellects are often to be found amongst the poor classes of the community as in the higher walks of society."

From such evidence as is available, it may be said Fayette McMullen was a successful business man. In addition to the part he played in the operation of the stage coach and wagon train lines, he at an early age dealt extensively in real estate and at one time owned land in several sections of Scott County. Too, he operated a ferry boat across the



North Fork of the Holston River for a period of time until this business was destroyed in the early 1840's by the construction of a carriage bridge near the same place.

Upon his moving to Marion, he was in the mercantile business for a period of years. In 1869 he established a newspaper called the Patriot; after a few years he sold the paper to Marcellious P. Venerable who combined it with the Herald and for a time it was published as The Patriot and Herald. Fayette was a member of the first board of trustees of Marion Female College, founded in 1873; a year later he was one of the founders of the Bank of Marion and became a member of the first Board of Directors.

To the end of his days his interest in politics and his keen desire for public office never deserted him. After the Civil War he left the Democratic party. However, he ran three or four races for Congress but always as an independent candidate. In each of his final races he received a respectable vote. In 1878 and only two years before his death Colonel James B. Richmond, the regular Democratic candidate, defeated Fayette, the Independent, by the slim margin of 291 in the district.

Lewis P. Summers writes that Colonel McMullen was one of the very popular men, effective politician, and excellent campaigner to be found in the district; that he "kissed the babies, joked with the men and flattered the women." The number of voters in his day was relatively small since a man to qualify to vote had to be a free, white male and the owner of not less than twenty-five acres of land with a house or 100 acres without a house. It was said, however, that Fayette McMullen knew most of the voters of the district.

It is generally admitted that Colonel McMullen was one of the most colorful political characters in Southwestern Virginia history during his era.

Many are the stories told of his political exploits. Probably the most widely quoted one is related by Senator Vest of Missouri, the author of the immortal eulogy to the dog. The story was told to show the driving urge in some people to make a speech. Said Senator Vest, "Old Fayette McMullen was canvassing his district for a nomination for Congress, years ago, and during the canvass a man was hung in that locality for murder. About ten thousand men collected to witness the scene, and among them Old Mac, who by favor



of the sherriff, occupied a place on the platform in the rear of the gallows, his oratorical mouth watering at the sight of the magnificent audience in front. When everything was ready, as is usual in such cases, the sheriff asked the culprit if he had anything to say before the sentence of the law was passed upon him; to which the condemned responded that he would say nothing. Whereupon Old Mac stepped forward, rubbing his hands, and remarked: "Mr. Sheriff, if the gentlemen will yield his time to me, I will embrace this occasion to make a few remarks on the political situation, and announce myself a candidate for Congress." Incidentally, it may be said this story was also used by the late Huey Long in his campaign for the United States Senate from Louisiana.

Fayette McMullen, too, was a man of considerable temper. On four different occasions he was charged in the Scott County Court with assault and battery. The charges in three of the cases were dismissed without trial; in one of the cases he was fined the sum of 44 1/2 cents.

Dr. Goodridge Wilson relates an episode that occurred in Smyth County. A group of horse traders once visited Marion; among them was at least one horse thief who stole a horse belonging to a Mr. James White Sheffey. Mr. Sheffey induced Fayette McMullen to go with him to their camp four or five miles from the town. They found the horse, and Sheffey demanded it to be given him. The thief refused, Mr. Sheffey reached for his horse's bridle, and the thief for his gun. McMullen pulled a long knife out of the back of his coat collar and with one thrust cut the fellow's throat and killed him.

A third incident indicating a display of temper is related in a book entitled The Fighting Parson, a book dealing with the life of William Gannaway Brownlow and written by his son. The senior Mr. Brownlow in 1842 was the editor of The Whig, a paper published in East Tennessee, probably in Greenville; that year he was also running for Congress against Andrew Johnson. In the course of the campaign the editor stepped across the state line in a very critical attack upon the upcoming legislator from Virginia, Fayette McMullen.

There was at that time a camp meeting in progress at Ketron's Camp Ground, sometimes called the Reedy Creek Camp Grounds. Fayette, knowing the Fighting Parson



was conducting a church gathering there, decided he, too, would attend and with his cane proceeded to thrash the Parson very severely. The Parson, armed with a derringer pistol, attempted to use it; fortunately, however, only the cap exploded.

Fayette McMullen was killed by a switching train near the depot at Wytheville, Virginia on November 8, 1880. Scott County, in the 150 years of its organized history has probably never had the opportunity to contribute its part in the making of a more colorful personality or greater natural leader of men. Some may argue that Scott County has no right to claim Fayette McMullen; but it was here he came while yet in his teens to make his home; and it was here he was elected to his first public office at an early age of twenty-one. It was Scott County he represented in the Virginia Legislature for some fifteen years; too, it was from Scott County he was first elected to Congress. And it was in Scott County he had his many friends and admirers. Yes, Scott County is entitled to claim Fayette McMullen, the Picturesque Southwestern Virginian, as one of her distinguished sons.

#### Editorial Note:

The author of this paper was getting ready to enter reference numbers to source material when he became suddenly ill. Death followed. Consequently no one has been able to make the citations. However the source materials are listed below.

Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Washington State Library, Olympia, Wash.

Ohio State Library, Columbus, Ohio

Virginia State Library, Richmond, Virginia

I have also quoted from the following historical books: The Secessionalist Movement in Virginia, by Shanks, History of Washington County by Lewis P. Summers, History of Smythe County by Goodridge Wilson, the Fighting Parson by Brownlow.



AUBURN LORENZO, PRIDEMORE EMINENT STATE SENATOR,  
CONGRESSMAN

1839-1900

By: Mrs. Rose S. Quillin

A tract of land, located in Scott County, Virginia, four miles west of Clinchport, and approximately twenty miles from Gate City, the county seat, has remained in the same family since the Revolution. This land lay along a mere trail, the first across the Appalachian Barrier. The tract of land originally more than one thousand acres, belonged to the Pridemore family (early spelling Pirgmore) and was later known as Purchase, Virginia.

Here lived Samuel Pridemore (born in 1784) with his wife Elender (born in 1789). This couple reared a son, Daniel Pridemore (born in 1810).

Daniel married Mary Ann Ingram (born 1810). She was the daughter of Isaac Ingram and Sallie Speers Ingram. They reared three children, Hiram Demosthenes Pridemore, Auburn Lorenzo Pridemore, and Sarah, who died in her early teens.

Since many of the most distinguished and illustrious men of America were born in log cabins, and the subject of this article was both distinguished and illustrious, it is easy to surmise that he too was born in a log cabin; however, the writer well remembers the original "Prigmore" home, not a cabin but a two-story log house. The downstairs of this house was used in my childhood as a loom room. The stairway versus the pole ladder was often referred to in conversations with my father, who reminded me that the real stairway, the clock, the nearby smokehouse (with its wooden lock), the barn, (larger than the house), corn crib and wheat bin did not bespeak of dire poverty of my mother's ancestors, but rather emphasized the fact that the crib full of corn, wheat bin, smokehouse, and always the goodly shaped stacks of hay and blade fodder to last until grazing time insured the thrifty owners an independence and ease of conscience which possessors of quick wealth cannot experience because these are the fruits of honest toil, which none but the holders thereof have just claim." (1)



It was with this background of great family solidarity, that these children grew up, as did the children of Hiram D. Pridemore and his wife Susan Slemple Pridemore, and as did the children of Charles Calhoun Johnson and his wife Addie Pridemore Johnson at Purchase, Virginia. Surrounding the same building, the dwelling had to be enlarged, but, in the yard and in the old garden, in spite of the pattering of all those feet, can still be found the herbs: catnip for the babies, hops for the earache, horehound and burdock for colds, boneset for chills, smartweed for soaking sore feet, sage for sore throat and seasoning.

This security in a county which at that time held limited opportunities both educationally and otherwise, must have served as a stimulus for young Auburn L. Pridemore. He acquired a knowledge more comprehensive than is ordinarily allotted to any one man at that time. His attainments were largely the results of private study. In a sketch of him in Tyler's Encyclopedial of Virginia Biography, one finds that in August 1861 he recruited at the age of 24, a company for the Twenty-First Battalion, Virginia Infantry, of which he was Captain; in 1862 he was promoted to Major and later to Lieutenant-Colonel. In October 1863 he was commissioned Colonel of the Sixty-Fourth Regiment, Virginia Cavalry, which he commanded until the end of the war. (2) A brief review of the conflict in which he served with honor the State which gave him birth would not be amiss.

The firing upon Fort Sumpter was accepted as the first hostile engagement between the forces of the Confederacy and the Federal Government. Sumpter was evacuated by the forces on April 14, 1861. On the following day, April 15, 1861, President Lincoln issued a call upon the Several States for their quota of militia to aid in maintaining the National Union. This call of President Lincoln's precipitated action on the part of Virginia, and two days thereafter, on April 17, 1861, an Ordinance of Secession was passed. The Governor, John Letcher, thereupon issued a proclamation announcing the accession of Virginia to the Confederacy. Immediately after this, a military league was formed of the people of Virginia with the "Confederate States of the South". By this agreement, the latter were bound to march to the aid of Virginia against the invasion of the Federal Government. (3)



Records show that the Federal Government at this time enlisted and his subjected to its control four times as many troops as the Confederates. These records also disclose that the Confederacy killed, wounded, captured and routed more Federal troops than it possessed. This amazing feat has rarely, if ever, been surpassed by the military achievements of any people. History does not furnish another instance in which our Southern people who, almost destitute of war equipment, won greater victories from armies far larger, supplied with the latest and most efficient arms. Here I am reminded of a first-hand story told to my husband as we drove William L. Johnson, a private in the Confederacy, over some of the camping places he had known during his service in the war. As he recounted to us a number of incidents, he turned to Hubert, whom he always called "Herbert", and remarked, "Herbert, I have always felt that if we had had the equipment you boys had in World War I, we'd have won that one!"

Notwithstanding all the aforestated advantages of the Union, Pridemore proved himself, as did others wearing the gray--bold, resolute, sincere and courageous. He had conspicuous ability and strong convictions. Auburn Lorenzo Pridemore was proud of the opportunities to serve his country. He gloriously measured up to them. He met them. They were not easy. To substantiate this, references are made here to the battle of Jonesville.

On the last day of the year 1863, Lieutenant James W. Orr, a Lee Countian and friend of Colonel Pridemore, learned that the Federals were in Jonesville, and rushed eastward on horseback to alert Colonel Pridemore, then encamped at Yocum Station.

At the same time General William E. Jones, in command of the area Confederate troops, moved out of his encampment in Powell Valley west of Jonesville and marched toward the town. General Jones had been awaiting an opportunity to entrap the Federals under the command of Major Beers. Now that opportunity was at hand, because Colonel Pridemore, had the Powell Valley road to the east blocked as well as the road northward through Crank's Gap into Kentucky.

With Colonel Pridemore converging upon the county seat with a column of soldiers from the east and General Jones



from the west, the Federals were soon trapped. On the afternoon of January 3, after a spirited charge upon the enemy in weather below zero. Major Beers surrendered his 383 men, three pieces of artillery, and 27 six-mule teams.

According to Lieutenant Orr, Colonel Pridemore mounted a stump after the surrender and made a speech to his men, complimenting them on their gallantry, and on what had been accomplished. For the Confederates this was a victory worthy of celebration, although many soldiers suffered frozen feet and one man froze to death on his saddle. (4)

The above experience of January 3, 1864 and others too numerous to be related in this paper, were only to be culminated in Colonel Pridemore's receiving the following Terms of Surrender in 1865:

“HEADQUARTERS, CUMBERLAND GAP”

Col. Pridemore

April 20, 1865

“Commanding 64th Virginia”

“You can avail yourself of the same conditions that General Lee accepted from General Grant: That is, to Surrender your Command, lay down your arms and return to your Allegiance to the Federal Government. You will make complete Rolls in Duplicate of all men belonging to your Command, one to be retained by yourself; the other by me. Also, you will surrender all Arms, Ammunition and all Public property in your possession; also all animals taken from Union Citizens: These being the conditions of Lee's Surrender. I will not attempt to deceive you or any other “Confederate Officer”; therefore I would admonish all men in your condition to give up and abandon a cause which has proved to be so hopeless to your Principles and Ruinous to our common Country. Hoping you and all other Rebels now in arms against the Federal Government, may avail yourselves of the present opportunity of returning to your Allegiance to a Government that has never harmed either of you. I have the honor to be very Respectfully,

“Your Obedient Servent

W. Y. Dillard

Col. Commanding U. S. Forces  
Cumberland Gap” (5)



His acceptance of this order of surrender, without a trace of venom, in my estimation, makes Colonel Pridemore one of the preeminent men of Southwest Virginia's resplendent past.

The return to private life must have required more courage and patience than did the experience of war, for war heroes were now faced with reconstruction, laws and innumerable difficulties, because of burdensome taxation and constantly falling prices. In spite of all those difficulties, Colonel Pridemore realized now that the war was over, but the battle of self-abnegation, the battle for better things and better conditions was now a new obligation, and the question which the subject of this paper must have asked and answered was the challenge given to us by President John F. Kennedy nearly 100 year later--"Ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country." To equip himself better to do this, Colonel Pridemore studied law and was admitted to the Bar in 1867.

Numerous stories of his legal ability and of Hon. Patrick Hagan, under whom he studied law, are among my earliest memories. Those who knew Auburn Lorenzo Pridemore well, honored him and loved him. Of the humble and lowly he was especially regardful. He was always a defense attorney, consistently refusing to serve as a prosecutor. It was his career as an attorney that portrayed him as a man as strong, forceful and dynamic. He was strong in intellect. He was proud, high minded, sensitive, but not self-centered.

His quick wit and ability at rejoinder is illustrated by the following incident:

During a trial in Gate City, Virginia, he was bantered by Colonel James B. Richmond, an eminent lawyer, who had attended Emory and Henry College. Colonel Richmond unfortunately referred to the scant schooling of the defense attorney, whereupon, Colonel Pridemore challenged Richmond to name two letters of the Greek alphabet. Richmond not being able to comply with the challenge, Colonel Pridemore proceeded then and there not only to repeat the Greek alphabet, but to recite a Greek poem.

Another episode in the same courthouse, November 22, 1875, attests to his aggressiveness and earnestness. Henry



S. Kane, another prominent attorney and Attorney Pridemore became so "terribly in earnest" that each was placed under \$500.00 peace bond by Judge John A. Kelly, to keep the peace for three months. Patrick Hagan was Colonel Pridemore's bondman, and Colonel James B. Richmond went on the bond for Henry S. Kane. (6)

As proof of Colonel Pridemore's imperiousness, I give you a clipping from a local newspaper of the day with the heading:

### "LION OF LEE"

"General A. L. Pridemore, the strong and sagacious legal lion of Lee, was conspicuous among the visitors to Bristol Thursday. He was going to Abingdon to appear together with Colonel Patrick Hagan, in the case of Campbell and Hagan vs W. S. Whitely, als. This case is to be heard during Judge Paul's special session of U. S. Court, now convened at Abingdon. It is a case of Settlement of Account and involves some five thousand dollars. As might have been known, the case is one of no ordinary import, else the General would not have been in it, as he is too tall timber to be involved in small strips." (7)

Advancement in his profession grew. The conditions of our country and the state of affairs were such that they were a challenge to his clear and strong intellect. Carpet baggers were ruining the South; elsewhere graft prevailed in government and business. It was the Age of Boss Tweed, Jim Fish, and Jay Gould. These conditions made young Pridemore aware of the importance of political activities.

In 1865 Colonel Pridemore had been elected to the House of Delegates, but was unable to take his seat on account of the Reconstruction Regime. Thwarted in his ambition to serve in the House of Delegates because of struggles of Reconstruction, Colonel Pridemore realized his ambition in 1871 when he ran and was elected Member of the Virginia State Senate for the 1871-1875 term. According to manuscript statements of votes reported by Lee, Wise, and Buchanan Counties, which composed the 19th Senatorial District in the election of 1871, the following were the candidates for State Senator from that district, together with the total vote polled by each:



A. L. Pridemore-1,401 votes

Campbell Slemp-653 votes

Robert F. Dickenson-281 votes

Thus, it was for fifty cents cost of the above one photoprint did I learn in April, 1966 that my grandfather's brother defeated my grandmother's brother, Campbell Slemp for State Senator in 1871. (8)

On the farm that belonged to our ancestors since the close of the Revolution and from which at night the glow of the fiery coke ovens in Wise County could be seen, as a mere child I listened at the knees of my grandmother, Susan Slemp Pridemore, to many stories; and many there were about Captain Hiram D. Pridemore and his brother Colonel Auburn L. Pridemore. Very distinctly do I remember that it was a story proudly related and cherished in our family how Pridemore as a young senator in Richmond had not only made himself heard in the State Senate, but was often in demand as a speaker at meetings of the Richmond Chamber of Commerce. These speeches had given Gen. John D. Imboden information about the raw resources in Southwest Virginia, and Gen. Pridemore extended him an invitation to visit him and see for himself the industrial possibilities in this area. Imboden came. He gave his findings to a group of industrialists at a dinner in 1879 at Pittsburg, Pennsylvania. He was paid further to investigate these possibilities. The result was that industrialists took options on acres and acres of land. Soon thereafter the first coal mine was opened at Inman in Wise County. Not far from this mine the village of Imboden sprang up.

The Imboden story had been a favorite; therefore it was such a happy experience to relate the family version within the past few months at the discussion period of a Southwest Virginia Historical Meeting to Professor L. Henson who had done extensive research, and who gave a most interesting and informative paper on Gen. John D. Imboden.

It was a revelation to find positive proof that it was the knowledge and persuasive power of Colonel Pridemore that had helped promote the idea. It is also a source of satisfaction to know that he lived to see the development. Not until later did I come into the possession of an article published in the "Staunton Spectator", of Wednesday, August 3, 1887, in reference to the Development of Southwest Virginia coal



fields. This newspaper article not only discussed the rich coal fields in Southwest Virginia, but gave sufficient proof of the Imboden story of my childhood and gave me further reason for the pride of my kinsmen, Auburn Lornezo Pridemore. Following is a quote from said article:

"Colonel Pridemore of Lee County is mentioned as having in 1871 prophesied the extent of the resources of this locality. Colonel Pridemore served Lee, Scott and Wise Counties as a lawyer and was engaged in most of the important cases in the three counties above named. He was a self-made man; was a good speaker; an authority on history and an exceptional conversation-list; the work of building a railroad was commenced by Virginia in 1858 by branching at Bristol, Tennessee from the great Southwestern line from Norfolk to Memphis. The war coming on ended operations and the State afterwards ceased under the requirements of its fundamental law, to engage in such work. All efforts having failed to build the line to Cumberland Gap, the people of Bristol, and the interior country toward the Kentucky line interested began to work out the problem of a narrow gage road. They acquired possession of the right of way, and the work done on the projected line.

"The questions in State politics in 1871, were of a grave character, and the members of the General Assembly then returned, were in a large measure, new men, who had come upon the arena and unknown in the role of legislators before war. A. L. Pridemore was returning to the Senate. His was a far-off interior district, averaging seventy miles or more to the nearest line of railroad with no early prospect of having its condition improved through such agencies. The young Senator was not a medium man either in forming or expressing his views. There was a manliness and sincerity in his style that won him friends and all could discern he was there to promote the interests of his constituents and to serve the State with fidelity.

"The management of the Chesapeake and Ohio line of railway was then engaged in pushing its completion to the Kentucky border, which was an accomplishment in 1874--in that as well as many other interests of a like kind to different parts of the State, there were frequent conferences and exchange of views, generally under the auspices of the



Richmond Chamber of Commerce. Members of the Legislature interested attended, and among them was General Pridemore. He took part in the discussion, and his hearers were amazed as they listened to his sketches of the evidences of great natural wealth in his district, and furthermore that it was practicable to cross the Cumberland mountains with a railroad of easy grades without the expense of a tunnel, and then he specified that it could be done at Big Stone Gap, in Wise County. At and around that locality he cited the surface evidence of great coal basins and immense iron deposits, whilst the forests and valleys and streams were their own witness to every holder. At that time no surveyors' transit had run lines to the portals, and passing through the Natural Tunnel of several hundred feet in Scott County, overcoming a chief obstacle in the route of a railroad by that grand work of nature. Nor was it known then that it was practicable to pass the mountain barrier without incurring the cost of a long tunnel. Asserting the existence of the then scarcely known natural wealth and claiming that at the Big Stone Gap was a surface route for a railroad line, the reader can well imagine the attention the speaker received in his earnest utterances.

'In these meeting General John D. Imboden was an attentive participant. Having never visited the locality of his theme, noted his saying. (How they were employed years later has been related in the story the writer recalled from childhood) however, my story did not include the fact that General Imboden was accompanied by the distinguished Professor of Geology, in the University of New York, John J. Stevenson, -the survey was made. It was a lengthy and complete document with illustrations and was published in the Virginias in February and March 1881. The scientific research and exploration more than a thousand times over, confirmed all General Pridemore had said in Richmond as the result of his observations nine years previously. Professor Stevenson in the opening of this report refers to the explorations made in that region by Professor Robers, the father of American geology, when making his geological survey of Virginia. He regretted his inability to receive the benefits of it, for the work was not then published, but has been since under the supervision of Major Jud Hotchkiss.



**"A company was immediately formed of Pennsylvanians and work continued on the railroad. Another company was subsequently formed, which has pushed the railroad by a complete track to the interior of Scott County and driving ahead for the Big Stone Gap.**

**"The Norfolk and Western line will build through the Gap, and is well on the way by the Clinch Valley section, on which a large force is at work. Professor Stevenson has been recalled, and is reviewing his former work and finding new resources to increase the wealth of that section of country.**

**"When General Pridemore made his representations before the Richmond audience, there was not even a dream of the realization to which they have lead.**

**"Whilst quietly prosecuting his profession and attending to his industrial interests, there must arise moments of pleasing reflection associated with the past as he looks out and beholds large capital and immense energies concentrated at the point, then a far-off interior corner of great wealth for which he ventured to ask the friendly aid which has come to declare its fullness.'" (9)**

**The far-off interior corner was Scott County, the county of his birth; Lee County was his established home; Lee, Wise, and Buchanan had chosen him as Senator. Colonel Pridemore had made known their potentialities, and now Virginia was known beyond Appamotox--an achievement not to be discounted.**

**Early in his career as Senator, his ability as an orator was recognized. By the end of his term of service in that body, he established himself as a satirist of the first order.**

**Below is a sample of a satire of his published by a Richmond newspaper (10) at the close of his term. An original clipping of it is now in my possession. This satire fully illustrates his knowledge of existing conditions and problems:**

### **THE VIRGINIA SENATE**

**A Satire - After Pope or Horace**

**"Farewell to the Senate, its pleasure, its ills.  
Its committees, resolves, discussions, and bills;  
Its Presidents, its clerks to each and to all;**



The pages, the desks, the chairs and the hall,  
 A long, mayhap forever, adieu;  
 Yet these dear objects I'll keep in my view.  
 'Tis here in this hall, for four long years,  
 We've met in debate our equals and peers,  
 While each for his section sought special reliefs,  
 The good of the whole was the object in chief,  
 To instance and show and for nothing more,  
 Here's the tax bill discussion for the year '74  
 Fairfax would labor, to show beyond a doubt,  
 That all of the funds in the Treasury were out.  
 He'd urge upon Senators learned and grave.  
 That they of the Court of Appeals were the slave;  
 And by its decision, supreme in the land,  
 We must pay the State's debt, and pay on demand.  
 For repudiation stares us full in the face;  
 We're dishonored at home, and abroad in disgrace  
 To this Fredicksburg most nobly responds,  
 And in eloquence pleads for the creditors' bonds;  
 Depicts with great force the orphans' demand,  
 And equally clear shows the wealth of the land.  
 He agrees in the main with sister Fairfax.  
 Except that no merchant in town should pay tax.  
 Next Lynchburg appears with deep heaving sigh,  
 And tells us destruction is now drawing nigh.  
 Unless the coupons be punctually met,  
 And we shoulder at once the whole public debt,  
 Yet, to tax the poor merchants whose wants are so great,  
 Would be a disgrace and shame on the State,  
 Then save me and mine from the unjust demand:  
 I'm for an increase in taxes; but only on land,  
 Then Norfolk petitions, remonstrates and prays  
 The finance committee to find other ways,  
 To force our merchants with others to compete,  
 Will deprive them of trade, and of course bread and meat.  
 Augusta then rises, and says I decry,  
 The committee increases the tax on Red Eye;  
 To smell up new subjects "they're ever intent  
 Yet whiskey I vow won't carry one cent"  
 This finance committee, from the inference I draw  
 Like some "mighty mastodon", to fill up its maw,  
 Extends its wide arms, and takes in at will,



The corn and the meal, the tubs and the malt,  
worm and the still.

With Augusta dear Franklin casts in her lot,  
And loudly condemns this iniquitous plot,  
Shows how the State debt of which the committee here  
prates,

Is due, not from Virginia, but the United States.

And that she demands in her people's great name,  
An exemption for apples and the juice of the same.  
Now Patrick comes in and proceeds to lay down the  
conflict of interest between country and town,  
Shows merchants in cities have been in a fret,  
And justice demands, that they escape not;

But with others in common, they cast in their lot.

That they be not permitted to pass in such a case,

While the poor country farmer, goes through by a squeeze.

At the sound of a farmer Lee raises her nap,

And declares for the rights of 'Cumberland Gap.'

Subsequent to his four years in the State Senate, Colonel Pridemore's ambitions grew. On June 8, 1876, from the home which he had established in Jonesville, Virginia, Colonel Pridemore announced himself as a candidate for Congress of the United States. This announcement was made by printed circulars and addressed to the People of the Ninth Congressional District. In the first paragraph of the announcement he sets forth his platform, and I quote:

'I shall endeavor through friendly efforts to increase the number of places for sittings of the District Courts of the United States, thus saving the people from such long travel and heavy expenses. It will moreover be a vast saving to the Government and insure a more agreeable enforcement of that Court's important jurisdiction. I shall do all in my power to lessen the burdens upon our imported articles, and loosen the shackles of that great staple - tobacco. I will try to have extended to the farmers, the privilege of a limited traffic in it without taxation. I shall favor an increase of our currency and a postponement of the resumption of specie payments. I will on all occasions resist class legislation, and I favor such laws as fosters and builds up our industrial institutions.

'I point with pride, fellow citizens, to the journal of the



Virginia Senate, for the four years I served the State there, and challenge the production of one act of mine against the interest and welfare of the people I then served.

“To many of you I am unknown, and to such it may not be unfitting to say that I was born in the County of Scott, the home of my ancestors from the close of the Revolution to the present time. Reared in the usual way of farmers’ sons, laboring every year of my life until my twenty-fourth, then called in common with many of you by the voice of our loved state, to the bloody field of war. I obeyed the summons, and for four years of that terrible struggle, I shared the toils; privations and dangers common to the man of that time. And now with a conscience clear, and hands free from the spoils of political enemies, I can say I performed as best I could the weighty trusts confided to me by brave comrades. When the clouds of war passed away I was driven from the sheltering protection of a kind father’s home - hunted by enemies, homeless and money less I found among the people of Lee a refuge from the pelting storms of political persecution, friends who shared with me the necessaries of life, and the comforts of their homes. Driven by necessity to seek pursuits where capital was not a requisite, I chose the profession of law, and have never yet had reason to regret that choice. I know this will be urged against me, but I would appeal to those men whose sons are now treading the parts in part traversed by me; I mean the poor farmers’ and laborers’ sons, whose intellects are among the best, and whose chances are among the worst, not do discourage their efforts, and laudable desires for promotion, by prescribing those of us, who have struggled to take our stand among the sons of the mighty. I am the only man, the son of a poor and humble farmer, born and reared in your midst, who has since the war ventured to offer this high and important trust; what a sad commentary on the men who fell in our late struggle. And then your own sons on the road to preferment, by encouraging me, if I am otherwise found worthy. I do not seek to array class against class, but I do seek to have justice done my own, and to warn them of the great blunder of turning against one whose life has been spent in their service.

“It has been my hope and my aspirations to do something in life that would encourage our farmers and laborers’ sons



to make strong efforts to raise themselves to a participation in the affairs of the nation. Did you all know the trials, the struggles, the poverty through which I have passed, I believe today, you would throw over me the broad mantle of charity and help me in this my hardest struggle in life. I enter this contest trembling with fear. Yet, animated by the voice of those who know me, encouraged by the smiles of those who trod the fiery path of war with me, I enter the list and humbly appeal to you for your support, if I stand the equal of my competitors. If elected, I shall not be a candidate for re-election the ensuing term.

"Yours Respectfully,  
"A. L. Pridemore." (11)

Jonesville, June 8th, 1876

Prior to the nominating convention held in Abingdon, Virginia, Colonel Pridemore was honored with the title "Brigadier General." This was of great value to him in the convention which nominated him for Congress. (12)

A rare find for me has been an extra edition of the MONTGOMERY MESSENGER, published in Christiansburg, Virginia, September 1, 1876, which gives a complete account of how the counties voted at the Abingdon Convention. The following quote is from a news item from the BRISTOL NEWS which was published in the extra under the title:

#### "PRIDEMORE AND MCMULLIN AT ABINGDON"

"The demonstration yesterday at Abingdon was enough to have turned an older head than that of General Pridemore. There has been nothing like it in the county for many years. How many desired to hear the discussion we can't tell. The court room could not have held another man, and though the dense pack was almost to suffocation the interest not for a moment abated during the two hours that it lasted. If Pridemore had poured kerosene on the crowd and ignited it with a parlor match, he would not have fired it more effectively than it was figuratively done by his admirable speech. We have never seen anything like it. He was introduced by C. F. Trigg of the County Committee and was proceeding to address the crowd when Gov. McMullin passed rapidly through the crowd up the steps to the stand with an agility that would have done him credit at the age of 21. He



cried out, "Hold, hold on." He claimed the right to open debate but the crowd screamed for Pridemore. The Governor insisted, but the crowd would not hear him, and the din of cries for Pridemore could not be subdued. After a brief conference by the two antagonists, Gen. Pridemore proceeded. His speech was again applauded beyond description, and his anecdotes which were few, shook the building like an earthquake.

"When Gov. McMullin attempted to reply, it seemed difficult for him to get a hearing. The crowd remained. Dr. Alex attempted to still the crowd, but with poor success. The Governor took the stand and made his speech. It is proper to add that Gen. Pridemore did all in his power to still the tempest and have his adversary accorded a respectful hearing, and in this he succeeded.

"Gov. McMullin stated in his speech that, if when he goes to Lee and Scott he finds the people in those two counties against him, he will withdraw and yield Gen. Pridemore a hearty support. He had some friends in the house, but it was evident that Pridemore had made fearful inroads upon them, and the few that remained were few indeed.

"We feel very favorable and kindly disposed toward Gov. McMullin, but the demonstration that was made at Abingdon very clearly foreshadows the vast strength of Gen. Pridemore before the people, and is more than the Governor ought to attempt to resist. No one longer doubted that the convention had nominated the strongest man in the District or that he will sweep the field like a tornado." (14)

The vote by the counties was given in the same Christiansburg paper, and after the seventh ballot Montgomery changed her votes solidly for Pridemore. He was declared the nominee and thus was chosen to break the power of the Carpet Bag Rule. In the general election in the fall, he defeated George T. Egbert, Republican, by a vote of 15,127 to 4,791, and served in the Congress from March 4, 1877 to 1879. (14)

In the presidential election of 1876 Pridemore's party boasted that the opposite party could not cope with the incorruptible Samuel J. Tilden, the Democratic candidate. However, the Republican candidate defeated Tilden. Some weeks after the inauguration the new president invited Alexander Graham Bell and Thomas A. Edison to the



White House to demonstrate their inventions. Mr. Bell fascinated the president with his telephone; Mr. Edison played his new phonograph.

The writer is not certain that Congressman Pridemore, then living in Washington, ever met Thomas A. Edison. However, Uncle Carroll Pridemore, enjoyed relating that when he was a young man a person came to Clinchport with the new wonder phonograph and one of the records he played was that of a speech of his Uncle Auburn Pridemore.

During this year, Pridemore fascinated an associate, young Theodore Roosevelt with first hand Indian stories. In all probability, when Mr. Roosevelt, visited Colonel Pridemore at the latter's home in Lee County in search of material for his book, The Winning of the West, later written in four volumes, he heard again the Indian story of the Henderson Indian Treaty on the Watauga, and saw arrow heads and other Indian artifacts--a vast collection of them--which the excongressman was gathering, and which later his son, Hagan, gave to the College of William and Mary.

From Pridemore's home in Jonesville, Virginia, the visitors crossed Wallen's Ridge, to Purchase and spent the night with Congressman Pridemore's brother, Captain Hiram D. Pridemore. My mother was always very proud of the fact that she helped prepare the meals for their distinguished guest who later became President of the United States. A precious memory of the writer's is that years later, a former pupil of hers married Archibald Roosevelt, grandson of Theodore Roosevelt, and she was invited to a reception given at the bride's home. The bride, a former pupil of the writer had told her husband of his grandfather's visit in the home of her teacher's grandfather, and much to the teacher's surprise, she was asked if it would be possible for the young Mr. Roosevelt to meet the teacher's mother. After assuring them that everyone would be delighted, the teacher rushed home to tell her folk. On a beautiful Sunday morning in her home in Kingsport, the mother had the pleasure of meeting the grandson of Theodore Roosevelt, and the teacher heard again the story, that as a child she had so often told to make other children in her neighborhood envious.

His record in Congress surpassed that of his record as State Senator. He never faltered in his fundamental beliefs as evidenced in the last paragraph of his speech when the bill



H. R. 467 was before the Committee--

"And I desire to say further, now that the war is ended, I have no regrets for the past; but I stand up now and here declare that I am ready to defend this government as I was the government which I formerly served; and I will say that I believe then, So help me God! I had the constitutional right to defend the principles I advocated." (16)

He made himself known to committees to which he was appointed, the most important of which was that of Foreign Relations. In connection with this appointment, he was sent to Europe, which furnished the writer with another story.

Not only was I impressed as a child that my kinsman had had the honor helping to plan a railroad but also of naming some railroad stations and some post offices in our native State. Auburn Lorenzo Pridemore was probably the only man in history who had his own private railroad station. The name of this station was Ben Hur, located approximately four miles from Jonesville. The Station got the name given it by Colonel Pridemore from General Lew Wallace book, Ben Hur.

It is a unique one, in that it has a large fireplace and in his day a furnished bedroom. In the days when he made return trips from Richmond or Washington or the World's Fair in Chicago or Europe, no one, not even the servants imposed upon to meet him at nighttime when the roads were deep with mud or weather uncomfortable; instead, he spent the night in his own depot at Ben Hur.

To leave out entirely the romance in the General's life would be unfair. He was thrice married. Margaret Mitchell in the second paragraph of "Gone with the Wind" gives a description that explains the physical attraction of Southern women of the day. During the years of the war Southern womanhood reached heights of sacrifice and courage which will live forever in story and song. With such glorious women, men could not fail to be heroes. Miss Caledonia Justina Hill, daughter of Elijah and Eliza Hill, of Jonesville, Virginia, in 1869, became the bride of Col. Auburn Lorenzo Pridemore. To this union was born one child, Mary. After his wife's death, the Colonel was a very eligible widower, as is attested by the priceless Valentine found among his personal papers:



February 14th, 1870

"O, Valentine, Valentine  
How fast the time does go  
And yet I'm single as before,  
O' Colonel, ain't it so.

Now if I was a man, Colonel,  
I sure wouldn't spend my life;  
Not single like yourself, Colonel  
But, with some pretty wife.

I say pretty, Colonel  
Because many such there be.  
And if you cannot better do;  
Y' come and marry me.  
But now I'll tell you what's a fact  
Even down on Walden's Creek;  
Courting sprees, will sometimes last  
\*Knights, and days a solid week.

\*Ought to be spelled (night)  
Good by Colonel if you please  
Do give us a call.  
And if I get you by the lips;  
I'll bet I make you squall.

PS The initials of the 4th verse  
You'll find to spell my name  
and if you die a widower  
Upon your head the blame.'" (16)

However, the author of the Valentine, whose initials spell Beck was not successful in her pursuit of the widower, and the Colonel was married the second time to Miss Lucy Elizabeth Crockett, granddaughter of Elijah and Eliza Hill. Miss Crockett was his new bride at the time of the Tilden-Hendricks Ralley in Christianburg. To this union was born one son, Hiram Hagan Pridemore. Unfortunately Lucy Crockett Pridemore did not live long, and General Pridemore took for his third bride a Scott County woman, Sallie Jane Richmond Niel. This charming lady proved further the good judgement of the General and endeared herself to all his



kith and kin. She affectionately was "Ma" Pridemore, not only to the General's children but to his grandchildren as well.

General Pridemore was seriously injured in a train wreck, which resulted in complications. It was during this illness he requested that his brother's children come to see him. Thus it was that the writer, a little girl, through no merit of her own, was driven with her mother and baby brother, Charles Franklin Johnson from Fairview to Jonesville. The journey was made in a hack with her mother's brother, Hiram Carroll Pridemore. The party left Fairview at daybreak. It reached the top of historical Wallen's Ridge at late lunchtime (The first picnic lunch the writer can remember). An exciting experience and even now a pleasant memory was that of being led by the writer's uncle to the edge of the precipice and allowed to watch the plowing in the lowlands far below. The man, his team, and the plow she can see now as miniature toys. The party reached Jonesville long after sunset.

On the journey from Fairview to Jonesville the little girl was a passenger because neither the father nor mother could induce any of the neighbors to keep their unruly daughter. So the younger sister, Esther Mae, remained with the neighbors, and the father hence the bad little girl was privileged to see General Auburn L. Pridemore. It was an ordeal to which, perhaps a child 4 1/2 years old should not have been subjected, but now how very happy she is that her elders did not feel that she was too young to meet the loved General of the family. Now, even as this is written, the writer vividly recalls the chilly feeling of his hand as he took hers, and can see the long arm reached slowly out to draw her closer. Afraid? Probably she was, but the grownups were expecting a well-behaved little girl, and there was one-afraid not to be. Now, more than sixty years later, how she wishes she could have listened to his stories of the trips he had taken, of his voyage to Europe, and the many, many thing about him for which she has had to search.

There were other children there-the Mary Pridemore Sewell's children, Dona, Houston, and Saluda. They were perfect host and hostesses to one a bit younger than they.

One person who was faithful to every duty to the General



to the last, was Alex Martin, a slave, formerly owned by Captain Martin, and reared on a nearby farm in Lee County, about one mile south of the Courthouse. Alex's desire to be free had caused him some trouble, and he had to sojourn away from Jonesville for a while. On returning, he lived for over 50 years with Colonel Pridemore. A more trustworthy person Lee County probably has never produced. His responsibility for the General's guests even unto the last one, and an adage he used have proved helpful to me many times. One she has never heard used since, but one which stuck in her memory word for word.

One of Alex's duties was to take the horses from the barn to the watering trough. The Sewell children would earnestly beg to ride and used the fact that the writer, then their guest, should be given an opportunity. They offered to gather the cobs and carry in all the chips, but Alex, knowing what was best, would shake his head and say, "Run along, run along. I rather do without your eggs than listen to your cackle."

Another story, given to the writer later, which shows Alex's ability to think was one pertaining to an incident which happened when he was deceived and cheated by a citizen of the county. In the days long ago hogs were marked by the owner, and turned out for mast. These marks were on the ears of the animal. Alex had come to the General with the story, and after he was told to be on his guard next time, Alex's answer was, "There will be no next time, General. I'll give a hog an ear of corn any day to make him show his mark." Alex Martin's adages have been very helpful to the writer and the memory of his faithfulness to his master is sufficient proof that his master was a very kind man.

It would not be fair to either of these men, one a proud father, the other a man so proud of his righthand man, Alex Martin, not to mention here Alex Martin's son, Dr. James L. Martin, who at the time of the writer's childhood visit was a lad of approximately thirteen years of age. This lad grew up and went into the field of Radiology. His advancement as an individual in the field of medical science has been marvelous. He has had an important part in the investigation of the cancer cell. Dr. Martin is now probably the oldest person living who knew the subject of this paper, and this son of a slave pays Colonel Pridemore tribute in a newspaper article which substantiates again the fact that



Auburn Lorenzo Pridemore viewed all mankind with a deep and abiding love that men feel for their fellowmen when their own hearts are right.

General Pridemore has left a legacy which those who bear his name will long cherish.

Purchase Farm, the place of his birth in Scott County, Virginia, remains in the possession of two great-neices. It is hallowed because of the fact that his descendants know there is no path in the woods which he has not trod, no hill that he has not walked in meditation. The pond, the spring, the blue green ridge were solaces for his heart-aches, and inspirations for his full life. It was here he brought his first bride, and here his first child was born.

He died at his home in Jonesville, Virginia, May 17, 1900. The mortal remains were placed in the Jonesville Cemetery.

#### FOOTNOTES

1. Life in Old Virginia, by James J. McDonald: Page 315
2. A. Vol. 3, Page 12, Tylers Encyclopedia of Biography.  
  
B. Photostatic copies of military orders, discharge, and other historical records from the personal desk of General Pridemore, which are now in the possessions of the only living grandson, Ben Pridemore, son of Hiram Hagan Pridemore, of White Creek, Tennessee.
3. Life in Old Virginia, by James J. McDonald: Page 162.
4. Kencaid, Robert L. Wilderness Road, Bobbs-Merrill Co. Page 277. Also Lieutenant Orr in his "Battle of Jonesville."
5. From the personal papers, contributed by Ben Pridemore.
6. L. O. Book 5 - Page 113. Scott County Court House, Gate City, Virginia.
7. Original clipping from a Bristol newspaper in the writer's possession.



8. S. Bassett French Biographical sketches, Reel 3, No. 513.
9. "Staunton Spectator" Published Wednesday, August 13, 1887. Clippings now in my possession had been preserved and kept by a grandson, the late Houston Pridemore Sewell, son of the General's daughter, Mary Pridemore Sewell.
10. This original copy of the Richmond Newspaper was among those kept down through the years by the General's brother, Captain Hiram D. Pridemore.
11. Reproduction of the original circular given to the writer by Mrs. Huston Pridemore Sewell, South Boston, Virginia.
12. Letter from John W. Dudley, Assistant Archevist, Virginia State Library, Richmond, February 26, 1965.
13. An original copy of Bristol News in the writer's possession.
14. Summer's History of Southwest Virginia, Page 761.
15. Congressional Record, House, May 23, 1878, Pages 3724, 3725, 3729. Also the original speech as sent to his family in pamphlet form is now in my possession.
16. The original, complete with drawing and fancy penmanship, from the Colonel's private desk.

## GENERAL JOSEPH MARTIN, A FORGOTTEN PIONEER

1740-1898

By: Gordon Aronhime

Joseph Martin is a fine example of the gifted pioneer leader of the Old Southwest in the eighteenth century.



He lived a life of folk-lore proportions, held many offices in several states, and died almost forgotten.

This pioneer was the son of another Joseph Martin. Born in Bristol, England, Joseph Martin, Senior, was the second son and middle sibling of a wealthy merchant. Since, in those days, the younger son inherited the name only, Joseph was shipped as supercargo to America that he might provide for himself. He sailed on a ship called the Brice, a name he gave to his eldest son and which has remained in the family. (1)

Joseph Martin, Senior, remained in America. About 1729, he came to Albemarle County, then Goochland County, Virginia, where he met and married Susanna Childs, daughter of a well-to-do farmer. Hearing of this "degrading" act, his father in Bristol, England, disinherited his second son. Joseph, Senior, remained in Albemarle County, Virginia, dying there in 1760, leaving five sons and six daughters. General Joseph Martin was the third of these sons. (2) Colonel William Martin, son of General Joseph, thus characterized the grandfather he never saw: "My grandfather, on his death in 1760, left a pretty good estate. He was a perfect Englishman. Large and athletic, bold, daring, self-willed and supercilious with the highest sense of honor. And in him was depicted, as my father has told me, the completest form of the aristocracy of the British Government." (3) Of the brothers and sisters of his own father, William Martin wrote that they were of large physical stature, but, save for his own father (General Joseph Martin) and two aunts, they were of "mental mediocrity." (4)

General Joseph Martin was born in Albemarle County, Virginia sometime in 1740. From childhood, he was wild, undisciplined, intellectually lazy, and shiftless. Unusually large, he treated school as a joke, often running away, sometimes combining with other reprobates to form a neighborhood menance. His father, unable to curb him, apprenticed him to a carpenter.

That Joseph revolted against such a fate must not have much surprised his parents. He ran away and joined the army, the French and Indian War having just begun. William Martin's version was that his father and Thomas Sumter, later the famed Revolutionary General, ran off together to Fort Pitt. This does not seem correct, for



Joseph Martin was paid for patrolling the frontiers in Augusta County, Virginia prior to October 2, 1775. (5) It is more likely that Martin joined Sumter, who was six years his senior, in 1756 for the trip to Fort Pitt. Again, on November 30, 1757, though then only seventeen, Martin was paid for frontier services in Augusta County as a sergeant. (6)

An amusing episode arose on the return from the Fort Pitt tour of duty. Sumter and Martin got separated on their return. When Joseph arrived at Staunton, he was astonished to find his friend jailed for debt- astonished not at Sumter's being in debt or in jail, but at his being in jail for debt! Martin asked, and was granted, the boon of remaining in jail overnight with his friend. He had ten guineas and a tomahawk. The latter may have come from anywhere, but the former was probably the fruit of Martin's ruling vice-gambling. He left both the guineas and the tomahawk with Sumter, who used the gold to effect his release. It was thirty years before the two men met again, but Sumter then repaid the money. (7)

In 1762, Joseph Martin married Sarah Lucas, who according to her son William, was "a woman of the first order, but poor." (8) Faced now with not only realities, but responsibilities, Joseph Martin settled down to a livelihood that ill suited him - farming. An event occurred at this time which, at least in retrospect, is dramatic. Martin's English relatives, feeling remorse at the elder Joseph having been denied his patrimony because he had married in America, offered to share the estate, were a representative sent to England. Since Joseph, Senior was dead, the family chose young Joseph to represent them. Passage was booked on a ship, but, as often happened in the eighteenth century, Joseph was delayed and the ship sailed without him. It was lost at sea with all aboard.

Denied fortune this way, another avenue opened in the life of this remarkable man. The "Long Hunts" which began about this time were quite in the province of Joseph Martin. He made four of these annual, immensely profitable hunts, though these seem to have been in another area than the Southwest Virginia-East Tennessee locale in which he was so well known in later years. Martin had the qualities for this life. He was, as an expert gambler, willing to take bold risks; he was a hard drinker and a good fighter, yet quite-



tempered; he was assuredly a fine woodsman and he was a veteran of three years of frontier militia fighting. All these qualities combined to make his hunts successful enough to start him on the road to comparative riches. The last of Martin's annual "Long Hunts" ended in 1768. (9)

He then became overseer for a wealthy relative whose name is given simply as Minor in existing records. Mr. Minor was also closely connected by both blood and business with Dr. Thomas Walker. Perhaps Minor suggested that Walker secure Martin's services for a proposed trip of exploration and settlement in Southwest Virginia; perhaps Walker had known this wild, unruly, but able, natural leader of men for many years since both were from Albemarle County. At any rate, his selection of Martin to head the expedition to Powell's Valley furnished the first of two great, decisive turning points in General Joseph Martin's life. (10)

Western exploration and settlement was quite chaotic at the opening of the year 1769. The Royal Proclamation of 1763 had closed the area on tributaries of the Mississippi to all settlement, although traders to the Cherokee nation went back and forth freely. Some loopholes in the closed frontier were now beginning to appear. Dr. Walker was in the inner circle of Virginia government. With Colonel (later General) Andrew Lewis, Walker had been a representative for the Virginia government at the treaty of Fort Stanwix in May, 1768. It had been Walker alone, however, who had spoken for Virginia. (11) With the consummation of the treaty of Fort Stanwix, Walker was ready to try to open his western lands for settlement. The lure he cast before Martin was irresistible, the terms liberal, the backing irreproachable.

Twenty years earlier, a group of Virginians, including Dr. Walker, had formed the great Ohio Company which was given a grant of 800,000 acres of land. The terms of this grant did not limit the company to any one area within the domain of the Colony of Virginia for location of this land, and it did not require that tracts of land so located be of any specified size-merely that the total acreage taken up by the company could not exceed 800,000 acres, and that there be no prior valid claim.

Dr. Walker had made a trip of exploration in 1770 which



had led to his discovery of what is now the State of Kentucky, and his path then led through Powell's Valley, which had been named for one of his party.

It was to solidify his claim to the fertile reaches of Powell's Valley, adjacent to strategic Cumberland Gap, that Walker organized his expedition and promised Martin 21,000 acres of land plus pay for services. The only condition was that the Martin expedition must be the first to settle on the land. If this condition were not fulfilled other comers would get a thousand acres each and Martin's group nothing; if the condition were successfully met by Martin's forces, they were to have a document from Dr. Walker assuring them of the validity of their claim. This would serve as a deterrent to other would-be settlers. It was a gamble, and nothing appealed to Joseph Martin as much as gambling.

The leaders of this expedition, in addition to Joseph Martin, were his brother Brice and friend William Hord. The party set out from Albemarle and spent four days in reaching Staunton, where they spent several days "competing business," which seems to have meant gathering supplies at this frontier town. The little expedition arrived at Ingles Ferry on March 14, 1769. This crossing of the New river, in use till relatively recent times, was located a few miles upstream from the present Radford, Virginia. (13) Here, Martin sent his brother Brice forward with the slaves and the baggage, and waited for the arrival of Captain Hord and Dr. Walker. Two days later, the captain and the doctor arrived. On the next day, March 17, 1769, Dr. Walker returned to Albermarle and Hord and Martin headed for the wilderness. (12)

They heard disturbing news upon their arrival at the Holston river. A group headed by a man named Kirtley, and including Captain Rucker and others, had already left for the Valley, having paid a guide five pounds to pilot them. This guide was reputed to have known a way six days closer than the Martin route. Like all professional gamblers, Martin did not panic under stress. He ordered flour reduced to one quart per person. All other rations were to be sold, and the party to rely on the bounty of nature and the marksmanship of the men. Hiring a guide, they pushed off into the wilderness on the 18th. Two days later, they realized they were lost. (12)



This type of emergency often proves the making of men of real ability and Joseph Martin rose to this minor occasion. It was agreed that a rendezvous would be maintained at the present camp and each man would range out seeking the trail. On the third day, the agreed-upon triple blast of the hunting horn signalled that the Hunter's Trace had been found. This welcome signal came from the hunting horn of Joseph Martin. When the weary, but elated, man reassembled, it was only with difficulty that Martin restrained his men from committing mayhem upon the hapless "Guide." Exhausted by anxiety, the men felt a rest of two days was needed before they pushed on once more. On March 26, 1769, they found Powell's Valley. (12)

Exactly a week later, the baggage detail under Brother Brice Martin came into camp. It was still another two weeks later before the Kirbley-Rucker faction arrived in the Valley. Martin's party staked off a 21,000 acre tract near the present village of Rose Hill, Virginia. Here, they built a large stockaded fort. It proved useless. The Indians ran Martin's men off before the corn ripened. They went wearily back to Albemarle County, but retained title to their land. (12)

Little is known about Martin's activities between the summer of 1769 and that of 1774. In a letter to him dated September 23, 1771, Dr. Walker writes Martin that his land has been "saved by the honesty of the Cherokees." This appears to mean that the Cherokees who accompanied Colonel John Donelson, then running the so-called Indian line, insisted on Martin's land being included in the settler's side of the land by virtue of an offset. (14)

Martin was commissioned a captain of Pittsylvania County militia by Lord Dunmore, Virginia's last colonial governor, on August 25, 1774. (15) With the outbreak of Dunmore's War, though a captain, Martin was sent to serve as a lieutenant under Abraham Penn on New River. Since Penn was old and relatively infirm, Martin commanded the company, even receiving from Colonel William Preston, on November 4, 1774, the letter ordering disbandment of the company. (16) Martin returned to his farm to give commands to plow horses, not men. His commission as captain was routinely renewed when Dunmore's rule was superseded by the Committee of Public Safety when Virginia became a Commonwealth. (17)

A few months prior to the renewal of Martin's commission



by the Public Safety committee, an event took place on the banks of Watuaga river which influenced Martin's life. This was the largest American real estate transaction, the "sale" of thirty-two million acres of land for fifty thousand dollars in merchandise-the noted Transylvania purchase. Judge Richard Henderson made this transaction at the site of Elizabethton, Tennessee on March 17, 1775. Although Martin was not present at the sale, he was appointed agent and entry taker for Powell's Valley by Henderson. In the intervening year, Martin seems to have shuttled back and forth between Henry (then Pittsylvania) County and Powell's Valley. (18)

In midsummer, 1776, he received a letter from Colonel John Donelson, Andrew Jackson's future father-in-law, ordering him to assemble his militia company and march immediately to the Long Island of the Holston. (19) Joseph Martin was now thirty-six. Had he died at this point, there would be no need for surprise and regret that he has been bypassed by history. The events of the next fourteen years on the frontier were to change this.

One of Martin's soldiers in his Pittsylvania company, William Alexander, had this to say in his pension declaration: "In the month of June, 1776, he entered the service of the United States in the county of Pittsylvania, Va., as a volunteer for six months in a company commanded by Capt. Joseph Martin. He was marched from thence direct to the Long Island of the Holston where they joined the troops under the command of Col. Christie, or Christian. After being stationed at the Long Island of Holston for about six weeks during which time other troops were collecting and those that were there engaged in the erection of a Fort, they marched to the Towns." (20) This campaign was the largest of the many launched against the Cherokees by Virginia. Colonel William Christian, the youthful commander, had forty companies of perhaps fifty men each, plus drovers and wagon men. The strength of the expedition always approximated two thousand men, although it varied from time to time, since the forces gathered slowly at the Long Island and there were many men ill during the fall months. The troops marched to the Indian towns of Chota and Chilhowee and burned them, but met no opposition. They returned almost immediately; being gone perhaps a total of but six weeks. (21)



On the return of the troops, Martin and his company, which had his two brothers, Brice and John, as lieutenant and ensign, were stationed at the newly-built fort Patrick Henry, located at the upper end of the Long Island and on the north bank of Holston river. Since it was customary to man local forces with local troops, it is strange that Martin's company was chosen to garrison Patrick Henry. Martin was undoubtedly influenced in this by his large land holdings in Powell's Valley and his position with the Transylvania Company. It is an interesting commentary on his popularity with his troops that, although free to leave the company when the six months tour was over, the entire company of four sergeants and fifty men remained with their commander at Patrick Henry. (23)

Although the opening months of 1777 were no busier than any other in Martin's crowded life, it might be well to consider them in detail rather than in broad outline as heretofore. He was engaged in a number of overlapping and relatively important activities. Stationed as he was on the very brink of the Cherokee territory, he was subjected to constant skirmishes and parleys with the Indians as the first line of defense of the settlements. While he was at Fort Patrick Henry, the new county of Washington (Virginia) was formed. Being selected as a member of this initial court of the first political entity named for George Washington and first county established on the present TVA watershed, Martin rode horseback up the Island road, spending the night of January 27, 1777 with his friend, Anthony Bledsoe. He reached Black's Fort (now Abingdon) the next day. (24) His duties as frontier commander did not allow him to remain longer than the initial court of 28 January, and he returned to Patrick Henry Fort on the 30th, only to find that his company was to be transferred to a wilderness fort on the Clinch. This fort was called by the government Fort Lee, but the natives stubbornly continued to call it, as they had since 1774, or earlier, "Rye Cove." There was no more westerly, hence no more dangerous, fort than this on the Virginia frontier, exposed as it was to both the Cherokees and the dreaded "Shawnasee," as the settlers called the northern Indians. (25)

While at Fort Lee, he had a dangerous skirmish with the Indians in adjacent Powell's Valley in which two of his



best spies, the brothers Bunch, were seriously wounded. (26) Meanwhile, the Washington County court had appointed him to take the tithables of the county in the section north of the river Clinch, a difficult, tedious, and dangerous task that involved long, lonely rides over roughest terrain to secure the names of the scattered settlers. He was also commissioned a captain of the Washington County militia; he was appointed to distribute the flour sent from the east to aid the besieged and distressed settlers; and he was appointed a commission member to sell lands donated for the county seat of Washington. (27) As if defending the frontier at its most vulnerable spot, distributing flour to the hungry inhabitants, taking the tithables on the westernmost perimeter of the frontier, deliberating on the methods of selling lands to finance a courthouse, in addition to the regular duties of commanding a company of garrisoned troops were not enough, Martin had an additional task. He and his men built a new and strong fort at "Rye Cove" between 9 February and 9 April of that year. (28) His stay at Lee, was terminated in midsummer because of the treaty negotiated with the Cherokees at Long Island. In this treaty, the Indians relinquished a large region, retaining title only to Long Island which they did not cede until 1810. (29)

The most climactic event in Martin's life occurred on November 3, 1777 when Governor Patrick Henry appointed him superintendent of Indian Affairs for the Commonwealth of Virginia. (30) The appointment specified that Martin was to take up his residence in the Indian nation, yet he preferred to remain close to his holdings in Powell's Valley. He used an ingenious method to solve his dilemma, establishing residence on the Long Island of Holston, presumably on the lower, more fertile, end of the thousand acre island. He added to the residence, for his comfort, an Indian "wife" having at the same time his lawfully wedded wife, Sarah Lucas Martin, at home in Henry County. It is likely that some of Martin's neglect by his contemporaries and by posterity is due to this irregular act. Yet, with the exception of his son, William, none of the family in Henry County was in the least outraged by this act. There is strong evidence that this connection not only saved Martin's life, but that of the entire lower settlements on a number of occasions, for his Indian



"wife" was no ordinary person, but the daughter of Nancy Ward, herself perhaps the most famous Indian woman at the close of the eighteenth century. Nancy Ward was the niece of the "Little Carpenter," or Attacullaculla, the "emperor" of the Cherokees. Colonel William Martin has left an excellent defense of his father's conduct in a letter of July 7, 1842 to Lyman C. Draper. (31)

Always quick to realize the potential value of property, Martin took up a large tract of land on the site of the present city of Kingsport, Tennessee. (32) Meanwhile, he led a rather uneventful life in the uneasy quiet of the year 1778 on the Holtson. Early in 1779, he was offered a major's command in the nautical expedition of Colonel Evan Shelby to Chickamauga, but refused it. (33) Without relinquishing his membership in the Washington County, Virginia court, Martin took the oath of office as a member of the newly formed Sullivan County, North Carolina court at ceremonies held at Looney's Fort in February, 1780. (34) At the close of 1780 and in the first few days of 1781, he was a battalion commander in Colonel Arthur Campbell's successful Cherokee campaign. He is especially mentioned in Campbell's report to Governor Thomas Jefferson. (35) Six weeks later, having visited the camp of General Nathaniel Greene in piedmont Carolina, Martin stopped on his way home to deliver to Colonels William Preston and William Christion, copies of a commission from General Greene appointing the three men, Martin, Preston, and Christian, to treat with the Cherokees for peace. (36)

The succeeding years were full of overlapping posts, honors, and duties, all of which Martin seems to have successfully discharged without consideration of his own comfort or personal feelings. Because these are so numerous and overlapping, they are only summarized here. In 1783, he was a commissioner with Isaac Shelby and Colonel John Donelson, the latter now a resident of middle Tennessee and the former of Kentucky, to treat with the Chickasaws at French Lick (Nashville). Sarah Lucas Martin died in 1782 and Joseph married Susanna Graves in 1784, all the while retaining Betsy Ward, the Indian "wife" - a fact he did not at all withhold from Miss Graves. Just before his second marriage, Martin became involved in the questionable matter of the lands of the "Great Bent" of the Tennessee with two men he rather unwisely trusted -



John Sevier and William Blount. Although this scheme failed, Blount had the effrontery to urge Martin to open a land office at his Indian Agency on Long Island. Martin, a man of honor refused. By Christmas of 1785, he was in Tugaloo, Georgia, and seems at that time, although still a citizen of Virginia and Indian Agent for that state, as well as a member of the North Carolina Legislature, to have been elected to the Georgia legislature! In 1787, on the resignation of Evan Shelby as brigadier for upper western North Carolina (now east Tennessee), Martin was appointed Brigadier General of the Militia. He was also made Indian Agent for North Carolina the same year. (37)

A change in his fortunes, though not in his fortune, came in 1789, as the Indian affairs now became a federal matter and his long tenure as agent ended. He sold his huge holdings in Powell's Valley and his land near Long Island and returned to Henry County to live. (38) His Indian "wife" went to South Carolina to live with her aging mother, Nancy Ward. It is interesting that Betsy Ward came once to Henry County to visit the family and was graciously received by the second Mrs. Joseph Martin. In 1790, Martin was prominently mentioned for and many expected that he would become governor South of the River Ohio, but he was passed over in favor of the candidate of the North Carolina faction, William Blount. (37)

Martin, on his return to Southside Virginia, began a long membership in the Virginia House of Delegates. In 1793, he was appointed Brigadier General for his militia district by the governor of Virginia. Several years later, he was on the commission to settle the line between Virginia and Kentucky. Ten years later, in 1803, he served on the commission that finally solved the Virginia-Tennessee boundary which with its double lines of Walker and Henderson had harassed the border inhabitants since 1779. In the summer of 1808, he made a long journey at the request of the government through the Indian territories, armed with a safe-conduct signed by the Secretary of War. He returned in the autumn of 1808 feeble and worn-out. Soon after Thanksgiving, he suffered a stroke. He died quietly on December 18, 1808, at the age of 68, after a life which, remarkable as it is in rich detail, is not half so astounding as the fact that it has been completely ignored by historians. (37)



## FOOTNOTES

1. Colonel William Martin to Lyman C. Draper, Dixon Springs, Tennessee, June 1, 1842. (Draper Mss. 8 ZZ 2, 15 pages) This is the basic reference for information on the Martin family and the childhood of General Joseph Martin.
2. Will Book 2. 112, Albemarle County, Virginia. "Joseph Martin of Frederickville. Wife Ann, sons Brice, William, Joseph, John, and George: daughters Susannah, Mary (sic) Hammock, Sarah Burris, Martha Ann, and Olive."
3. Draper Mss. 8 ZZ 2, p. 2.
4. Ibid.
5. Order Book 4. 491. Augusta County, Virginia.
6. Draper Mss. 6 QQ 112.
7. Draper Mss. 3 XX 35; 8 ZZ 2, p. 5.
8. Draper Mss. 8 ZZ 2, p. 6.
9. Draper Mss. 8 ZZ 2; 1 XX 15.
10. Draper Mss. 8 ZZ 2, pp. 7-8.
11. Proceedings of the American Antiquary Society, N. S. XVIII, 391; papers of Sir William Johnson, VI, 297-298, 316-317.
12. This account of the expedition to Powell's Valley of 1769 is entirely from a letter written from Powell's Valley on May 9, 1769 by Martin, but apparently never sent (To Colonel Syme, it would seem). There appears to be no other account preserved of this expedition. Two copies of the letter of May 9, 1769 are to be found in the Draper Collection (but not the original letter.) These copies are 3 XX 29 (3-5) and 3 XX 7 (3-5).
13. This ferry was established in November, 1762. The authority for its establishment and rates for the year 1762-1763 are to be found in Hening 7, 588. Map references to this ferry are to be found on plates 56, 59, 61, and 63 of Atlas of American History, J. T. Adams, editor, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1943. On November 2, 1767, William Inglis (Ingles) gave bond with Israel Christian his surety for public ferry on his land - Will Book 4, 67, 21, 1767 to be used as the starting point of new road construction - Deed Book 9, 251, Augusta County, Virginia.



- 14 Draper Mss. 1 XX 1.
- 15 Draper Mss. 1 XX 2.
- 16 Draper Mss. 1 XX 3; 1 XX 4; 1 XX 5; 3 XX 18.
- 17 Draper Mss. 1 XX 7.
- 18 Draper Mss. 1 XX 8; 1 XX 9. For a reasonably accurate and fairly comprehensive brief account of the Transylvania Purchase, see T. P. Abernethy; Western Lands and the American Revolution. Russell and Russell, Inc. New York. 1959. Chapter IX covers this event.
- 19 Draper Mss. 1 XX 12.
- 20 Draper Mss. 2 DD 204-208.
- 21 Draper Mss. 8 ZZ 72 (3, 39). No satisfactory or even adequate, account of Christian's Cherokee Campaign of 1776 exists. Christian, brother-in-law of Patriek Henry, is one of the most interesting figures in the crowded tapestry that is the Holston Frontier. Born in 1743, he was killed by the Indians in Kentucky on April 9, 1786. A sketch of him appears in the Dictionary of American Biography. Perhaps the best account, by default, of his 1776 Cherokee Campaign is to be found in Chapter VI of Samuel C. Williams' Tennessee During the Revolution. Nashville, 1944. This account, as is unfortunately common with older Tennessee historians, distorts the perspective to favor their state above the truth. See also Draper Mss. 1 XX 31 and 4 QQ 74.
- 22 Draper Mss. 1 XX 11; 1 XX 31. Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, Volume 7, page 2.
- 23 Draper Mss. 1 XX 19.
- 24 World Book 1, p. 1, Washington County, Virginia.
- 25 Draper Mss. 1 XX 20; 1 XX 24.
- 26 Pension Statement of James Kincaid, National Archives P. S. S-16907.
- 27 Order Book 1, pp. 3, 7, 8, 9, Washington County, Va.
- 28 Draper Mss. 1 XX 32.
- 29 Draper Mss. 4 QQ 150-153, 155, 156, 157.
- 30 Draper Mss. 1 XX 29.
- 31 Draper Mss. 3 XX 4.
- 32 Deed Book 1, 104 (Land Grant # 196), Sullivan County, Tennessee, October 10, 1783 - "400 acres to Joseph



Martin on north side of Holston river in Long Island Flatts (sic).''

33. Draper Mss. 1 XX 38.
34. North Carolina State Records, Volume XIV, 136-114.
35. Calendar of Virginia State Papers, Volume I, 481 ff.
36. Papers of Thomas Jefferson, Volume 5, 231, Princeton University Press, 1951.
37. Deed Book 1, 104 (Land Grant # 196,) Sullivan County, 3 XX 13. Data on Martin as prospective Governor of the Territory South of the river Ohio is from Draper Mss. 3 XX 55 and from Territorial Papers of the United States, Volume 4, 21, Note 39. Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C.
38. Russell County, Virginia, Deed Book 1, pp. 24, 28, 30, 32, 99, and 101. In these deeds Martin sells a total of 2,400 acres of land for the sum of L 760. See also Calendar of Virginia State Papers, Volume IV, 428.







